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from the desk of...

THE *"PWI* 500" is a testament to a group of men who have dedicated themselves to the pursuit of athletic excellence. In an ideal world, we observers of this sport would be content to marvel at the accomplishments of this select group and not concern ourselves with backroom politics.

But wrestling isn't like mainstream sports, in which fans are content to focus only on that which is visible in the spotlight. Of course, we don't exactly have to look in dark corners to find the dirt in this game. It's everywhere, and wrestling isn't about to hire a cleaning service.

Vince McMahon in particular understands the value of controversy. It titillates the fans, ignites the media, and fills arenas. Shawn Michaels nailing Hulk Hogan with a superkick is controversial. So is the Diva Search. Face it: Friends assaulting friends and scantily clad catfighting women are not things many of us encounter on a day-to-day basis.

Pro wrestling exists to makes our lives a little less mundane. But you know, with some of the stuff that's happening in the sport right now, I could use a little mundane. For instance:

WWE airs "terrorist attack" by Muhammad Hassan's henchmen against The Undertaker. There's been a lot of talk about the timing of this taped segment, which aired July 7, the day of the terrorist attacks in London. Whether the segment could have been edited out of the *Smackdown* broadcast to me is secondary. WWE should not have put itself in a position to make such a blunder. With American soldiers being blown up on almost a daily basis, maybe—just maybe—WWE should have shown a little restraint. In the '60s and '70s, with Americans dying in Southeast Asia, the wrestling villains were remnant Nazis and Japanese from World War II. Not necessarily topical, but a little safer. You didn't see too many American wrestlers in cage matches against Viet Cong. WWE deserved to have this one blow up in its face.

Bruiser Brody Memorial Cup show held at Juan Loubriel Stadium. Fine location, the only problem being that that's the same venue at which the honoree was stabbed to death 17 years earlier. *Ugh!*

Brock Lesnar agrees to terms with WWE. If Lesnar still has any NFL contacts, he should place a call to the Dolphins' Ricky Williams. They may not have left for the same reasons (Williams—a stupid drug; Lesnar—a stupid dream), but they came back for the same reason (money).

Jim Cornette fired for slapping, Earl Hebner fired for selling, and a decent roster full of wrestlers fired because they're not Brock Lesnar. It's good to see that Cornette, the last person in this business with a temper, is finally gone ... Hebner traded in 17 years of employment and a secure future to sell some merchandise without permission. Said Vinnie Mac: "Earl screwed Earl" ... Lesnar will undoubtedly be greeted with a great deal of resentment in the locker room, but those who have the most reason to hate him won't even be there.

Matt Hardy, Lita, and Edge sell their dirty laundry. When Lita cheated on Hardy and had her affair with the married Edge, I briefly considered writing a column about how foolish we'd all feel if the three had staged this whole thing to set up a wrestling angle. Had I, I wouldn't have been too far off. Just proves that real life is far more bizarre than what even the most creative writers can make up.

Stu Saks
Publisher

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November 2005

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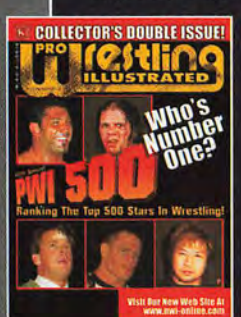
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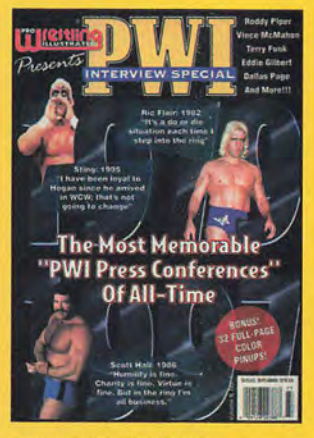

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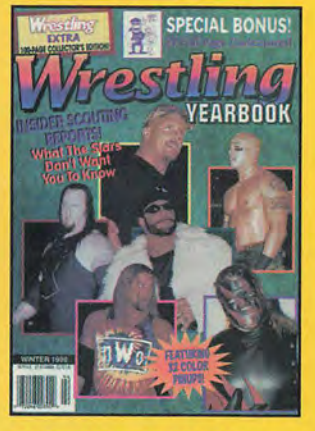

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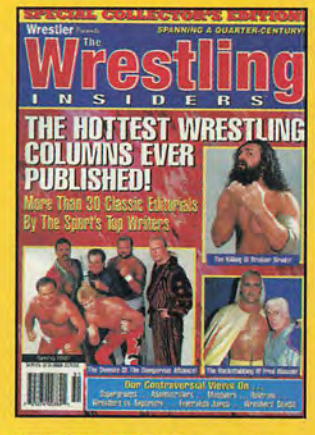
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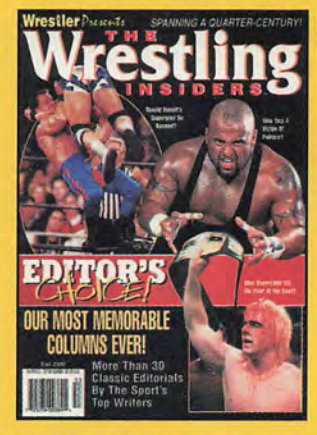
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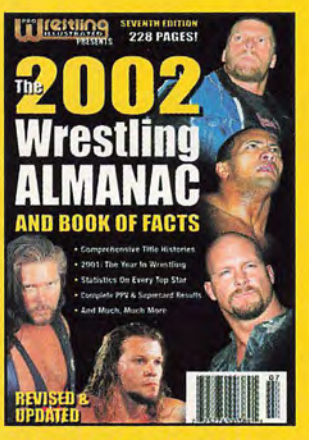
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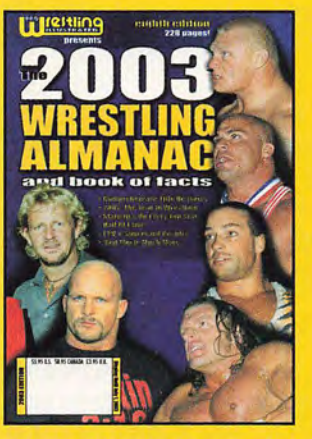

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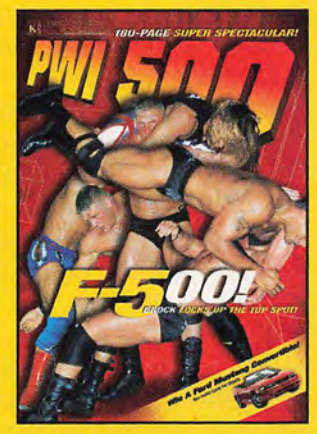
Keep your series intact with our eighth annual edition. Includes a review of 2002.



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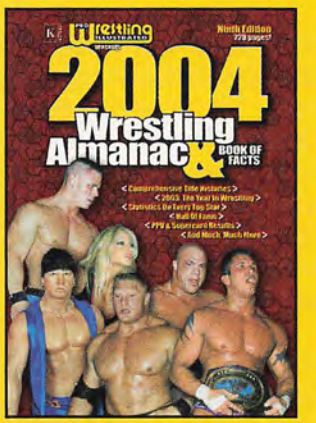

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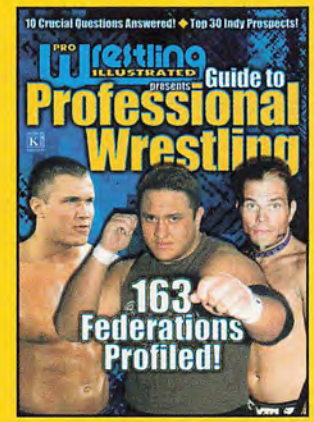
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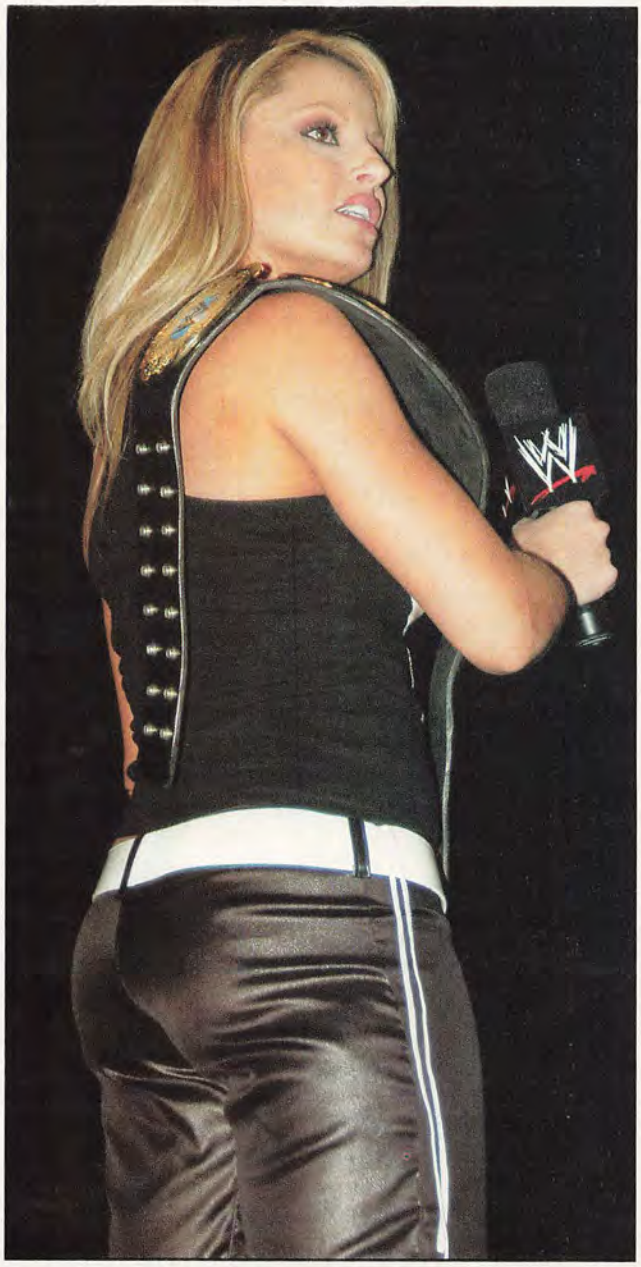
before the bell

Compiled by Will Welsh

If *PWI* Ruled The World ...

Everyone once in a while, we at *PWI* get asked what we would do if we were suddenly granted complete control of the entire professional wrestling industry. Most of the time, we answer this question as professionally as we can—which means that the answers our questioners receive track toward the boring side. However, in this exclusive section, we finally reveal the answers that we've been dying to share.



If *PWI* ruled the world, *PWI* Senior Writer Dan Murphy would replace Jonathan Coachman as the head of WWE's Diva Search. Now, this isn't because we necessary think that putting "The Murph" in such an enviable position would positively effect the Diva Search or the wrestling industry in general. Oh, no. We're just tired of listening to him pine for the position. Ever since last year's Diva Search competition began, it's always "Coach this" or "Coach that" with him. Finally, we'd be able to shut him up.

If *PWI* ruled the world, we'd force The Ultimate Warrior to read *The Complete Idiot's Guide To Public Speaking.* There's nobody in wrestling, absolutely nobody, who continually makes such a complete fool of himself while holding a microphone in hand. Attend one of his many collegiate lectures and you'll quickly see what we mean.

If *PWI* ruled the world, all of the main-event egos in TNA would be pushed aside so that the competition for the NWA heavyweight title would be as intriguing and interesting as the competition for the X championship and the NWA tag team championship.

If *PWI* ruled the world, Chris Jericho would never mention Fozzy in the midst of a wrestling angle ever again. Enough is enough. The band is good, but it's not *that* good.

If *PWI* ruled the world, Trish Stratus would beat the snot out of all the Diva Search contestants and demand real competition (sorry, Murph). The slow demise of WWE's women's division has been painful to watch.

If *PWI* ruled the world, The Rock would never again perform "The People's Eyebrow" in one of his movies. The first few times it was funny; now it's bordering absurd. Rock, we know you can do it—and so does everyone else who has ever heard of you. Stop it already.

If *PWI* ruled the world, the Carter family—owners of TNA—would get more support and so much more credit than they currently do. The promotion has never turned a profit, but the Carters' commitment to seeing the promotion become a success should be commended and commended often.

Talkin' Trash

10. The Blue Meanie beats JBL on an episode of *Smackdown* following their altercation at ECW One Night Stand. ***Hmmm,*** **it's odd about how talk of a lawsuit slipped away after that match.**

9. Matt Striker loses his New York City teaching position after taking sick days to wrestle. **You know, come to think of it, how did Irwin R. Schyster keep his day job as an accountant all those years?**

8. C.M. Punk comes to terms with WWE. **Good luck in the big leagues, Punk.**

7. John Cena begins making concert performances. **Appearing as the opening act: P.N. News!**

6. WWE cuts payroll by releasing a number of office staffers and wrestlers. **Welcome back, Mr. Lesnar.**

5. WWE launches its WWE Legends initiative. **Hopefully, WWE doesn't forget that its future lies in its core roster and not in its stars of yesteryear.**

4. Shawn Michaels superkicks Hulk Hogan. **It's hard to believe that we're seeing a Hogan-Michaels feud before a Hogan-Steve Austin feud.**

3. TNA's signs with Spike TV. **We'll take our own advice: Commendations to the Carters**

2. Matt Hardy makes his return to WWE. **As expected.**

1. Brock Lesnar and WWE hint at reconciliation. **Looks like Lesnar may be ready to resume his mantle as "The Next Big Thing" all over again.**

The Internet Insider

The following wrestling-related items were culled from various wrestling-related Web sites—or were they? See if you can pick out the items that were actually reported on the Internet (which doesn't necessarily mean that they're true) and the one's we blatantly made up. The answers appear at the end of this column on page 11.

1. USA Network, which will start airing *WWE Raw* in the fall, has taken note of the success that Hulk Hogan's reality show on VH1 and is trying to convince Vince McMahon to create a wrestling reality show. McMahon is leery of the request because USA wants a show that provides full backstage access to the inner workings of WWE, not some kind of *Tough Enough* spin-off. He responded to their initial request by telling them he'd gladly welcome the opportunity to do a reality show centered on Viscera, but those close to McMahon indicate that he never intended USA to take that offer seriously and that it was just an attempt by him to buy time.

2. After being eliminated from the WWE Diva Search competition, Alexis did an online interview in which she indicated Batista was upset she had been eliminated and that Leyla's wardrobe malfunction was pre-planned. However, Alexis' biggest revelation came when she spoke about WWE's writers. She said that most hadn't been with the promotion for very long and that they weren't as familiar with wrestling history as one would think. She went on to mention that she had prepared a poem with an allusion to Katie Vick in it, and one of the writers on the creative team didn't even know who Katie Vick was.

3. Wallid Ismail and Japanese wrestling legend Antonio Inoki have confirmed a debut show in Las Vegas at the New Orleans Casino. It's scheduled to be a mixed-martial arts card called Jungle Fight, based on the fact that the promotion started doing pay-per-view events held in the jungle for the Brazilian market. At this point in time, they seem unconcerned that the jungle and a Las Vegas casino have very little in common with one another.

4. Following the news that WWE won't extend the contracts of Buh Buh Ray and D-Von Dudley, The Dudley Boyz, there's an internal push by some within WWE to do away with both Raw and Smackdown's tag team divisions. The McMahon family hasn't ever been too terribly high on the tag team concept, and they believe it's gotten harder than ever to make tag team divisions a success, so it's believed that the McMahons may actually eliminate the two divisions. Those wrestlers strictly working as a tag team are so concerned that they're already placing calls to friends within TNA and old contacts on the independent circuit.

Bizarro 12 Questions With ... Kane

We value our health, which is why that there are certain questions that we'd never ask certain professional wrestlers during an interview. These are those questions:

12. We know that you're tough, but how much did wrestling in a ring in which the ropes were set on fire scare you?

11. Do you get tired of being the "big brother" tag team partner for guys like X-Pac, Spike Dudley, and The Hurricane?

10. WWE Films produced your movie, *Goodnight,* which is a horror flick. With your movie career burgeoning, are you afraid of getting typecast?

9. Do you ever put on the mask just for old-times sake?

8. When's the last time you've seen a dentist—not including Dr. Isaac Yankem?

7. Do you cut your own hair or do you actually pay somebody to screw your head up like that?

6. Where are all the burn marks?

5. How would you react if the pyro guys forget to prepare your flames and you went out to the ring, waved your arms, and nothing happened?

4. Did you enjoy your run as the fake Diesel?

3. Your one-night WWE title reign wasn't very satisfactory, was it?

2. You're big and you're red ... does that mean you taste like cinnamon?

And the number-one question that we'd never ask Kane:

1. What was it like acting as a stand-in for Matt Hardy these past few months?

We Heard That!

"I sat here the other night. It was the most surreal moment I've probably had in the last 20 years of my life. I was going through stuff for my place. It was a box that was sealed. It was WCW playing cards, a sealed box. It probably had in it 30 packs I'd guess. I opened the first pack. It was Davey Boy [Smith] and [Big] Bossman. The second pack had [Rick] Rude and [Curt] Hennig. In the third pack it was Scott Hall, who has been going through some real hard times. The sweat went down the crack of my back and my ass. '[Expletive] please don't tell me that these are tarot cards.'"

—Kevin Nash, in an interview with the *Pro Wrestling Torch*

"I don't care if Triple-H is on the card or The Rock or "Stone-Cold" [Steve Austin], eventually I was going to prove to Vince [McMahon] that I deserved to be the top guy. And if it weren't for my neck injuries, I believe I would be right now. I'd be the franchise."

—Kurt Angle, in an interview with IGN.com

"John Cena is a person that potentially ... maybe, could he break all the records? I'd love to see if he can, and if he does then it'll just be another high point for the business, so I wish the guy all the luck."

— "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin in an interview with the *Manchester Evening News*

"I'm not someone that's going behind that closed door in the office, pitching ideas on how to cut other people's throats and how to stop their careers down so I can get ahead. When it comes to whether a guy with these initials is really holding me back, I hear the fans, but I stay away from that."

—Rob Van Dam, discussing whether or not he thinks

Triple-H is holding him back, in an interview with *The Calgary Sun*

"I knew I was gone [from Ring of Honor] at the beginning of the year. I just woke up one day and knew. That's the way I work a lot of the time. I think it's creepy, too, but it's really helpful. I honestly knew I'd be history by June."

—C.M. Punk, discussing his leaving ROH to sign with WWE, in his online journal

Answers to Internet Insider:

Items 1 and 4 are totally made up.

caption me!

Think you're a better writer than the editors at *PWI?* Here's your chance to prove it, punk! This photo of Pauls Roma and Orndorff pointing at Jody "The Assassin" Hamilton, now the owner of Deep South Wrestling, WWE's newest developmental territory, demands a short, concise, and downright uproarious caption. If you think you're up to the task, e-mail your zany quips to prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com, or slap a stamp on an envelope and snail-mail it to "Caption Me!" Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Three issues from now, we'll share with you the best of the bunch—and the funnier the better.

July's Best

"From the creators of The Village People ... it's The Village Idiots!"
—Frank G. Lloyd Jr., Richwood, WV

***"Hmmmmmm* ... why is a wrestler of my caliber hanging with all these freaks?"**
—John C. Womack, Philadelphia, PA

"Introducing the cast of P. Diddy's *Making The Band 4* ..."
—Kevin Castro, cocktails_with_castro @hotmail.com

"Guys, I think that JBL dude gave us some bad directions to One Night Stand."
—Marlon Chavez, Lafayette, LA

"We're off to see The Wizard, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz!"
—Anthony Fascia, Brimley, MI

ringside

With Will Welsh

TNA IS BACK in the ballgame. After months of speculation about the promotion's television future, Spike TV and TNA announced that *Impact* would begin airing this fall on Spike TV's Saturday night programming lineup, dubbed 'Slammin' Saturday Night."

Raven and all his fans in TNA have one more very big reason to be excited (other than the fact that he's NWA champion): TNA finally has a new national TV deal ... with Spike TV!

"We are thrilled to be coming to Spike TV," TNA Entertainment President **Dixie Carter** said in a prepared statement. "We look forward to bringing our exciting style of Total Nonstop Action and entertainment to their male viewers."

As of press time, all indications point to the program taking over the time slot that *WWE Velocity* will leave behind once WWE moves its cable programming from Spike TV to the USA Network.

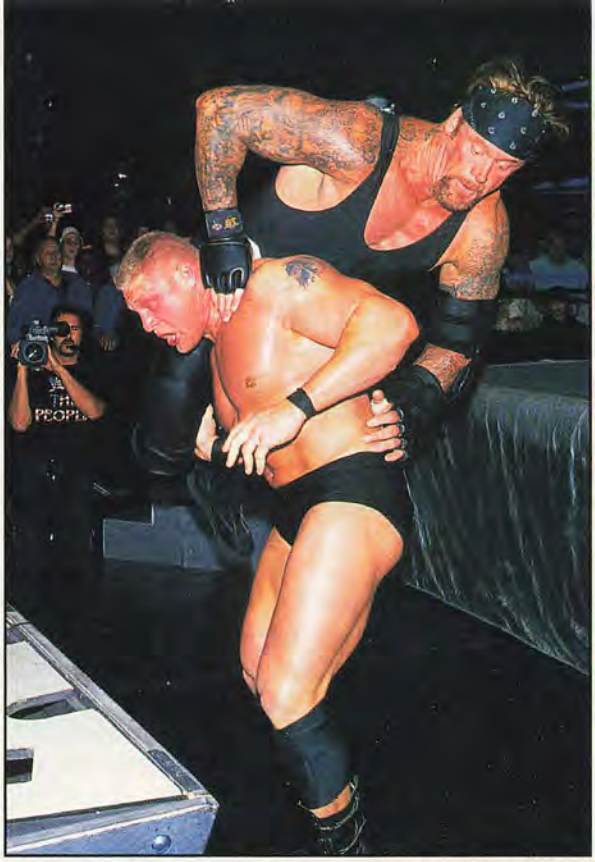
The deal was an absolute must-have in order for the promotion to continue into the future. More than anything else, in order to support its pay-per-view business, TNA needs national exposure. It needs to build its brand name among wrestling fans and establish itself as a legitimate competitor to WWE. This deal with Spike TV will give TNA the opportunity to establish all of that and so much more.

After more than three years of defying the odds and gutting it out, TNA finally has a chance to prosper.

Sure, a Monday night time slot opposite *Raw* would have been most beneficial for the company's long-term health (fans are already in their seats watching wrestling; how hard is it to turn the channel to another wrestling program to check it out?), but it's not like *Impact* is getting buried on a weak cable network in a ridiculous time slot that only diehard fans would go out of their way to find—like it was during its one-year run on Fox Sports Net. According to reports, *Impact* will most likely be joining a lineup that also includes **Howard Stern** and the UFC.

If those two shows don't scream instant access to TNA's valued 18- to 34-year-old demographic, what does?

After months of chest puffing by **Brock Lesnar** and WWE, which included a lawsuit filed by Lesnar against WWE claiming that the company was keeping him from earning a living, it looks like the former WWE champion is headed back to the promotion. In mid-July, wwe.com reported that Lesnar was



Brock Lesnar is saying all the right things about being excited to be headed back to WWE and being a pro wrestler again. With his return seemingly imminent, let's hope he truly has matured during the last year.

meeting with **Vince McMahon** about a possible comeback and printed quotes from the one-time wannabe NFL defensive lineman.

"I had some maturing to do," Lesnar told wwe.com. "There comes a time in everybody's life when you have to grow up. But professional wrestling is in my blood. I may have second-guessed it in the past, but I know it now."

Lesnar's return—would wwe.com run quotes from Lesnar if he wasn't coming back?—could absolutely bolster WWE's bottom line, but only if he's ready and willing to wrestle under WWE's terms. And he must be. Even though one of the reasons he left the first time around was the strenuous travel schedule, if he's going to be a part of the show, he needs to wrestle just as often as everyone else on the main roster. He's too important of an asset to be utilized otherwise.

Let's hope that during his time off, he learned this, because the last thing WWE needs right now is for Lesnar to hurt morale in the locker rooms by coming in and immediately complaining about anything.

Lesnar has already been WWE champion three times; now it's time for him to become something even more important—a locker room leader.

Back in comes Mr. Lesnar, out go a whole lot of WWE's mid-card talent. Over the summer, WWE released a number of wrestlers from both Raw and Smackdown. Gone are **Mark Jindrak**, **Maven**, **Billy Kidman**, **Charlie Haas** and his wife, former *Tough Enough* champ **Jackie Gayda**, **Matt Morgan**, **Kenzo Suzuki** and his wife, **Hiroko**, **Spike Dudley**, **Kevin Fertig** (the former **Mordecai**/**Seven**), **Marty Jannetty**, and divas **Ivory**, **Dawn Marie**, and **Joy Giovanni**.

WWE also announced that it wouldn't be renewing the contracts of **Buh Buh Ray** and **D-Von Dudley**, **The Dudley Boyz**.

Reaction to the cuts came quickly, as most people within WWE expected cuts to be made, but nobody ever expected the cuts to be so wide-ranging—and there were a number of surprises. Haas and Gayda had only gotten married a few weeks before their releases. Dawn Marie was pregnant at the time of her release and was reportedly told only a few weeks prior that her position with the company was safe. Maven is simply one of those guys whose potential was never fully realized, even though he was given ample opportunity to shine.

Perhaps the most surprising of the cuts were those of Buh Buh Ray and D-Von. WWE doesn't utilize its tag team divisions nearly as well as it could and should (and from all accounts, it doesn't care to, either), but considering the success that WWE just had with ECW One Night Stand and talks of making the ECW reunion show at least a yearly event, for the time being, Buh Buh Ray and D-Von should have been untouchable.

No doubt TNA will be looking to sign a number of these stars once their 90-day no-compete clauses expire.

Another WWE character who is headed out the door is none other than **Muhammad Hassan**. Hassan and WWE suffered through a tremendous (but well-deserved) public relations disaster following the decision to air Hassan's heinous terroristic-like attack on **The Undertaker** on *Smackdown* a night after the first London train car and bus bombings. Media outlets as diverse as *Variety,* MSNBC, and ESPN decried the segment, which featured Hassan talking to **Khosrow Daivari** about sacrificing himself for a greater good, and four masked men brutally attacking The Undertaker before lifting Daivari over their heads and carrying him out of the arena as if he were a martyr.

Two weeks after the segment aired, UPN (which holds some of

WWE knew when Muhammad Hassan made his TV debut that he'd be stirring up a lot of controversy. But the controversy Hassan stirred up in the wake of the London terrorist bombings was too much for UPN.

PWI TURNS 25!

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Pro Wrestling Illustrated recently celebrated its 25th year as the sport's number-one publication in a very special way. Those who subscribe to *PWI* or spotted it at the newsstand in time got a treat. Not only did *PWI* produce a silver anniversary special, but as an added bonus, we polybagged a re-print of our very first issue, from 1979!

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the responsibility for the incident, as it could have forced WWE to re-edit the program) informed WWE that it no longer wanted Hassan as part of the program at all.

"Due to the unfortunate terrorist attacks in London on Thursday, July 7, which coincided with our pre-produced *WWE Smackdown* program, UPN has asked us to be sensitive to the usage of the Arab-American character Muhammad Hassan," read a WWE press release. "We have agreed with UPN, and have not had the character on *Smackdown* since that date. It is uncertain as to whether or not the WWE will continue with this character beyond this Sunday's pay-per-view, The Great American Bash."

As indicated above, Hassan's future with WWE wasn't clear at press time, but it was considered unlikely that the company would send him back to Raw, as such a maneuver would only encourage even more mainstream criticism of the character and the company as a whole.

And while we're on the topic, let's talk about one more recent WWE release. **Jim Cornette**, whom many of you know from his days managing **The Midnight Express**, was released from his duties as booker of Ohio Valley Wrestling, WWE's main developmental territory, following a backstage episode in which he repeatedly slapped a wrestler for acting inappropriately during a TV taping. The decision to fire Cornette was an easy one, as he had just returned from a suspension by WWE due to their concerns about his temper following an incident between him and Kevin Fertig.

Finally, let me offer my congratulations to **Batista**. I'll admit to being torn between Batista and **John Cena** as my choice for number one in the *"PWI* 500," and I actually was leaning toward Cena when I first began considering the two men for the position. However, after studying Batista's year and all that he accomplished, it became clear to me that he overcame more in order to win the World championship than Cena had to do in order to win the WWE championship. Batista's successful defenses of the title, including his "Hell In A Cell" victory against **Triple-H**, really cemented his position in my mind. However, I look for Cena to be number one in the "500" in the future, possibly as soon as 2006.

That does it for me this month, fans. Enjoy your wanderings. □

Jim Cornette's temper got the best of him during his run-ins with Bobby Heenan earlier in the year in Ring of Honor. That infamous temper ultimately doomed him in OVW, as he was fired by WWE.

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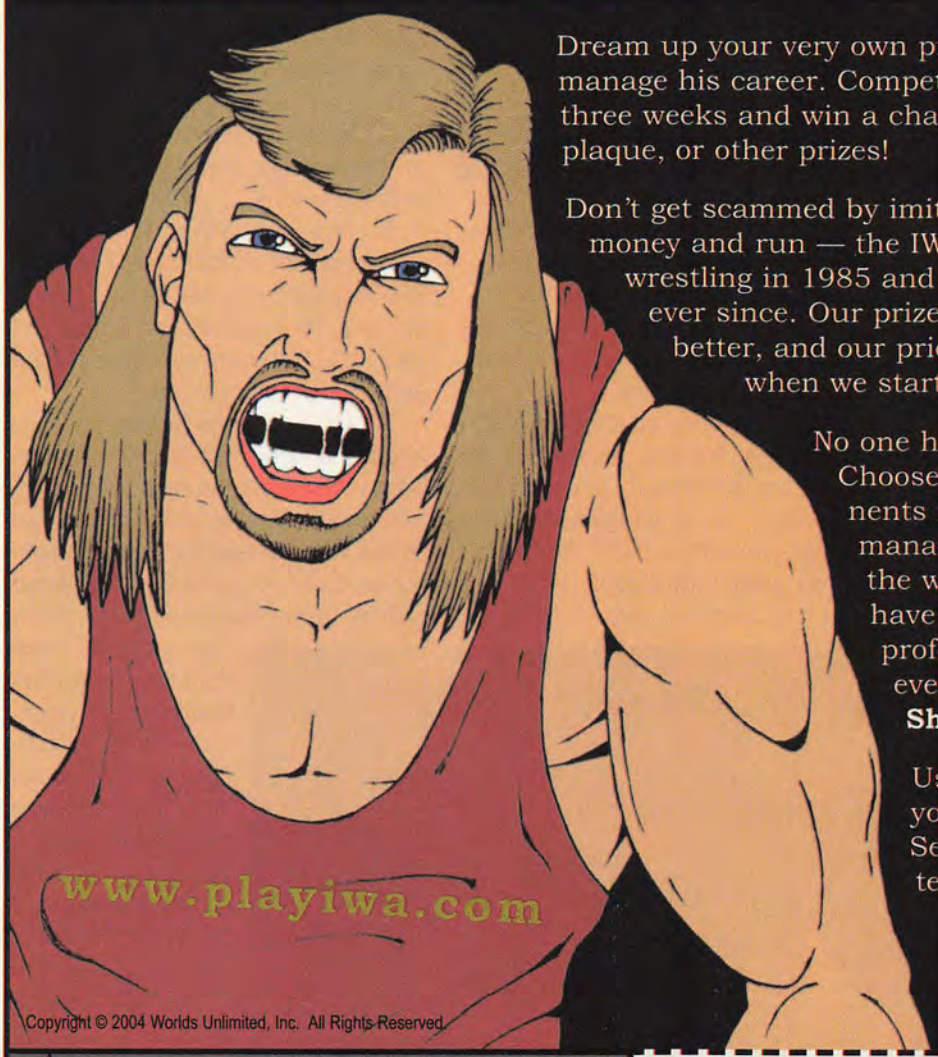

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WEAR-DOWN HOLDS

1. Airplane spin
2. Arm drag
3. Arm lock
4. Asian spike
5. Atomic drop
6. Bear hug
7. Bite
8. Body slam
9. Body tackle
10. Bulldog
11. Chicken wing
12. Choke slam
13. Claw
14. Clothesline
15. Cross body block
16. Double axehandle
17. Drop kick
18. Eagle split
19. Elbow smash
20. Eye gouge
21. Face rake
22. Fireman's carry ram
23. Flying body press
24. Flying clothesline
25. Flying drop kick
26. Flying elbow drop
27. Flying head butt
28. Flying mare
29. Forearm smash
30. Foreign object
31. Full nelson
32. Giant swing
33. Grapevine
34. Hair pull
35. Hammer lock
36. Head lock
37. Head stomp
38. Hip roll
39. Irish whip
40. Knee drop
41. Leg lock
42. Leg sweep
43. Manager interference
44. Monkey flip
45. Overhead toss
46. Pole ram
47. Reverse chin lock
48. Rolling scissors
49. Rope burn
50. Russian sickle
51. Savate kick
52. Scissors grip
53. Shoulder breaker
54. Slingshot
55. Snap mare
56. Step-over toe hold
57. Suplex
58. Surfboard
59. Turnbuckle smash
60. Wrist lock

SET-UP HOLDS

61. Abdominal stretch
62. Avalanche
63. Backbreaker
64. Backroll press
65. Belly to belly
66. Big splash
67. Boston crab
68. Brain buster
69. Camel clutch
70. Cobra clutch
71. Cradle
72. Crucifix
73. DDT
74. Figure four
75. Flying leg drop
76. Gourd buster
77. Hurricanrana
78. Moonsault
79. Neckbreaker
80. Piledriver
81. Power bomb
82. Power slam
83. Scorpion deathlock
84. Sleeper
85. Slingshot suplex
86. Spine buster
87. Stunner
88. Sunset flip
89. Superplex
90. Texas cloverleaf

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WRESTLER'S NAME (DO NOT USE ANY REAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES)

WEAR-DOWN HOLDS: *Choose 10 of the holds at the left numbered 1-60. Only use a hold once.*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

SET-UP HOLDS: *Choose 5 of the holds at the left numbered 61-90. Only use a hold once.*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

FINISHING HOLD: *Create your own custom final maneuver or choose a hold from our list.*

in focus

By Dave Lenker

PREVIEWING THE 2006 "*PWI* 500"

One of the common complaints of insiders whose favorite pastime has become trashing WWE Creative is that the promotion lacks long-term direction. Storylines/feuds/rivalries take unexpected and illogical turns, end abruptly, and lack continuity. As some of the older-timers are quick to point out to me, "Years ago, plans for next year's WrestleMania were put into motion before this year's WrestleMania was over."

Fear not—this isn't another column bashing WWE Creative. It's a column that looks ahead long-term, from a *PWI* perspective.

You see, this is always a fun time of year for me. As we put the wraps on another edition of the "*PWI* 500," I try to imagine what the early portion of the "500" for the following year might look like. And what it should look like. Oftentimes the two aren't one and the same.

Unlike WWE with WrestleMania, we really don't have much control over what the "500" looks like from one year to the next. The wrestlers and promoters might think otherwise, but they're really the ones with the control. I guess we could have ranked Akio in the top five in 2005, but we would have been laughed at unless it was a ranking of the top five *Velocity* performers of the previous 12 months.

So let's look ahead to the list of what the top 10 for the 2006 "*PWI* 500" *should* look like, in one man's opinion. To make things simpler, I'll stick to U.S.-based wrestlers for the purposes of this exercise.

10. Triple-H. This seems like just about the right spot for him, maybe even a few slots too high. All you H-haters out there would probably like to see him somewhere in the neighborhood of 310th, but the man is too talented to be wasted in a role that's too scaled back from the one he has had in recent years. If he ends up getting ranked about 10th, that tells me he'll have had a year in which he flutters in and out of the WWE title mix, wrestling at the main event level at times and just below it at other times. It also might mean he *doesn't* get a run with the WWE title, which would be a good thing for WWE. Good news at press time was that it appeared "The Game" was finally caving to the pressure to take a hiatus or at least a somewhat reduced role.

9. Randy Orton. I see a slow and steady climb back

A.J. Styles is a good bet to crack the top 10 in the "*PWI* 500" yet again next year, writes Dave Lenker. Nevertheless, he could see Styles' stock dropping just a little.

toward main event status for "The Legend Killer" in 2005-2006. Maybe even a little sneaky, as in there being so much else going on that you almost don't notice Orton improving, picking up momentum, and maneuvering his way back into contention for the World title. In spite of his struggles through the fall and winter of 2004, he should still be a huge part of WWE's future. And that future is already here.

8. A.J. Styles. I'm starting to see him in a role in TNA that's being filled to a large extent by guys like Chris Benoit and Kurt Angle in WWE, that of a guy who can have a good to great match with just about anyone and help take that guy to the next level, but not spend a lot of time at the highest level himself. Sure, both Benoit and Angle have taken the top spot in the "500" before, but Styles' chances of truly being the man in TNA have come and gone. Too many starts and abrupt stops (three) with him as NWA champion already. It's not for lack of talent, but he's not the guy to lead TNA into the future. Still, he can help those who will be leading TNA.

7. Rey Misterio Jr. It's been written in this space before, but it bears repeating: WWE ought to look at Misterio as potential World title material. If not this year, then in the next few. Maybe for only a short reign, but I'd be interested in seeing little Rey-Rey in the top spot for Smackdown. Maybe in 2006 he gets closer than ever … and earns his number-seven ranking

6. Matt Hardy. This was the toughest choice for me. Channeling the "Loose Cannon" spirit of Brian Pillman might work wonderfully for Hardy. It could just as easily flop. I'm intrigued by the possibilities, however. And I've long considered Hardy one of the sport's most underrated athletes. The next year will be the most important of his career.

5. Carlito Caribbean Cool. I hope WWE realizes that it has a real star in the making here. It's not that often that you introduce a guy who insults crowds the way Carlito does and still hears a few cheers. Triple-C can do that. I swear that a pretty good portion of the Las Vegas audience was pulling for Carlito over Shelton Benjamin at Vengeance even though it had no logical reason to do that. The temptation for WWE will be to portray Carlito as a mostly comedy figure who just barely skates by to win his matches. That wouldn't be cool. Let him show a little more Carlos Colon-like toughness during a long *non*-Honky Tonk Man-like Intercontinental title reign and get set to watch him become one of the most popular and successful stars in WWE in the next two years.

4. Samoa Joe. Read Jason Langin's story on page 96. Count me among those experts doing all that agreeing. This is the guy to take TNA to the next level.

3. Brock Lesnar. Funny how a man who insisted the life of a pro wrestler wasn't a life for him last spring is now discovering that pro wrestling had been swimming in his veins all along. It's what he was born to do! Hell, even if it isn't really what he was born to do, he's good at making it look like it was. Any talk of him making him work his way back up to main events slowly and humbly to show the rest of the locker room that he is, indeed, committed this time is ridiculous. If he isn't in one of the top two matches at WrestleMania 22, something's wrong. And if he's in one of those top two matches, he'll have earned this spot.

2. Batista. It would be good news for WWE if this year's number one dropped only to number two next year. It would most likely mean that Batista didn't crash and burn in the year following his World title victory at WrestleMania 21. I don't expect him to, by the way.

1. John Cena. See Batista. Cena almost took the number-one spot this year, and I think the chances of "The Doctor Of Thuganomics" flaming out are even slimmer than they are for big Dave. Add a little more meanness and vinegar to Cena's in-ring game to go with his tough talk (a nastier finisher would be nice, too), and he'll be poised to dominate WWE for a long time. This could just be Year One.

(Have a comment or question about "In Focus" or anything else you see in ***PWI?*** *You can contact Dave Lenker via e-mail at dave_lenker@yahoo.com.)* □

Carlito in the top five of the "500" in 2006 would be cool … and not just to Mr. Caribbean Cool himself. Lenker sees him as a megastar in the making.

off the top rope

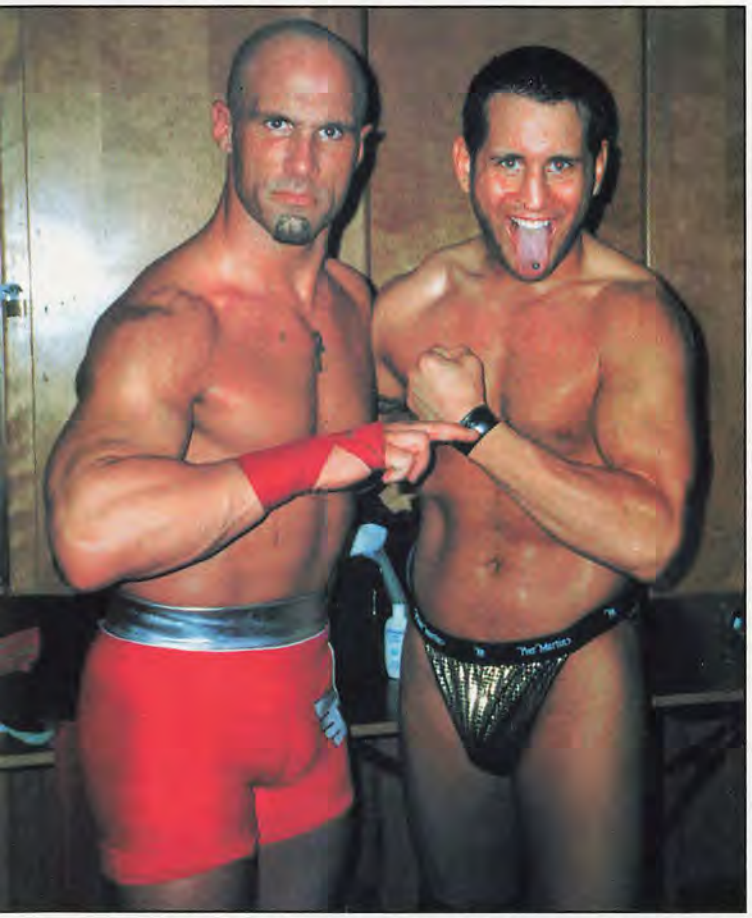
By Brandi Mankiewicz

If you wish to contribute to Brandi's mailbag, send your letters to:
TOP ROPE Box 1148 Ft. Washington, PA 19034
Or send e-mail to: **offthetoprope@yahoo.com**

*(Editor's note: In this issue, Brandi Mankiewicz discusses the "**PWI** 500." The usual letter format of this column will return next issue. As always, the opinions expressed in this column are those of Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the views of this magazine.)*

OH, CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN

The "*PWI* 500" is turning me into my Uncle Matt Brock. I'm sitting at home on my computer with my best friend, Captain Morgan. The good captain has helped me write many a column over the years, with nothing expected in return. He's been my only friend at times. He's been my worst enemy at times as well. But in the end, this captain's coconutty goodness always helps me relax.



I bet there was a time when Sexxxy Eddie thought this would be the closest he'd ever get to greatness (in this case, Chris Daniels), so he opted for a photograph of the event. Now, Eddie and his disturbing ring attire appear in *PWI*. I'm sure it's a lifelong dream come true for him.

No amount of my favorite captain this side of Lou Albano can help make this year's "*PWI* 500" seem like a finished product to me. No matter how many switches, substitutions, and flat-out rejections are made, it just doesn't look right to me. While others in the office get to pooh-pooh the list, taking a quick glance at it once it's fully ranked, I get to do the grunt work and crack my whip over the heads of my writers. For them, it's just one issue on our schedule. For me, it's more. The list is my albatross, my life, 'til death do us part. I can truly sympathize with Dr. Frankenstein.

I've spent the better part of my 10-plus years here at *PWI* coordinating this monster. I've seen it go from a goofy list with dead guys interspersed among the living to being something for which most independent wrestlers would kill their first born just to be included. I don't blame them. This is the one issue of the year in which independent wrestlers are given the chance to metaphorically rub shoulders with some of the best wrestlers from all around the world. Ever think you'd see Sexxxy Eddie's photo within 100 pages of Hiroyoshi Tenzan's image? Bet he never did, either.

Speaking of disturbing images, I know I'm always harping on the overall look of independent wrestlers these days. In my opinion, too many mark fans are in the locker rooms and in the ring. I long for the days when these ticketsellers were buying their own tickets for seats on the public side of the curtain. But for every Kevin Steen, there is a Christopher Daniels or a Colt Cabana. You know, guys who trained, have charisma, and deserve to be in the business. Guys who uphold the unwritten rules of the business, from handshakes to thank yous after the match.

This influx of untrained kids is forcing the truly talented guys out of the business. Do you think Scoot Andrews, Lance Storm, or Lex Lovett would have retired if the climate of the business hadn't changed so dramatically? I doubt it. Even my favorite sociopath, Bryan Danielson, has spent many hours debating his future in the business. I hate seeing the frustration oozing from the truly talented wrestlers as horrible Internet "flavor of the day" wrestlers make it on a show. I know it's beyond my control, but as someone who spends too much time as a

watcher and guardian of the business, I get pissed off by stuff like this. I sometimes wish I had a Wonder Twin so we could use our Wonder Twin powers for the good of the sport. But I don't. I just have this weird ring that doesn't work or match any rings owned by my friends.

I pity the recently released WWE guys who are daring enough to enter the independent scene to find work. For those who have done independents before, the change will be shocking. Charlie Haas recently returned to his old home promotion of Jersey All Pro Wrestling. While I'm sure he was happy to see guys like Low-Ki, with whom he grew up in this business, I bet he looked around—and down—at a lot of the newer kids in the locker room. Unfortunately, the reality of the independents now is that the kids are about six inches shorter than him. Charlie's a moose compared to these skinny greenhorns. I've seen him drill Jamie Noble into next Tuesday after an errand hard strike. I'd hate to see what will happen to the first unlucky, barely trained wannabe who pisses him off in the ring.

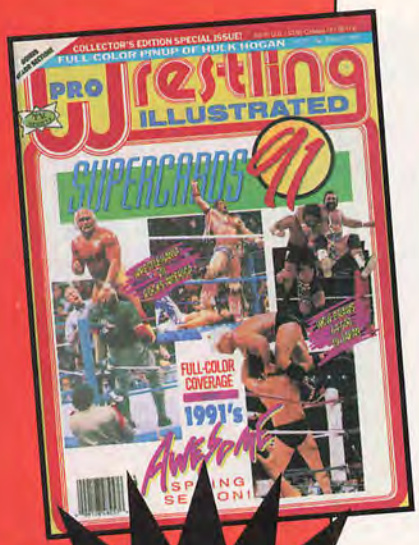
Now, I readily admit that I'm an elitist and a perfectionist in all aspects of my life. I demand nothing but the best from myself and those around me. I have made artists and writers alike call me all sorts of unprintable names all because I want my products to be perfect. I have even introduced myself to new hirees as simply "The Bitch," since that's the name they'll be calling me for the first few months of their tenures. I am completely bothered by the fact that more wannabe wrestlers than ever are stepping through the ropes and dropping elbows and knees on equally horrific wannabes. I'm horrified that the stupid Internet smarks pick a favorite using God knows what type of criteria, only to push this idiot to the moon in their online rants. I'm disgusted that promoters have lowered their standards to include some of these morons on their shows. I'm appalled that I receive their bios for the "*PWI* 500." You don't want to know how many bios are rejected based upon the lack of training, experience, size, etc. I feel completely defeated because we had to lower our standards in order to match the pile of crap we had received.

In 1995, a guy named Chicken Neck was ranked at 426. He was a skinny kid in a chicken suit who weighed in at a whopping $2.49 a pound. He was the favorite fowl of my fellow editor, Nigel Collins, who heads our boxing magazines. In an era of gimmick wrestlers and young, serious wrestlers, he was refreshing. Nowadays, I'm begging for Chicken Neck to return just so I can see a good gimmick that makes me enjoy wrestling again. Looking over this bunch of "500" entrants and rejects, I just don't see anything interesting like him coming down the pike. Our future is in jeopardy.

For as much as Chicken Neck amused everyone in my office back in 1995, he was a flash-in-the-pan gimmick wrestler who didn't last long. Even though the new skinny kids may taste like chicken, they aren't nearly as clever.

I know you fans don't always see me as the voice of reason, but for this moment, I am. Heed my advice: Stop accepting the low-quality wannabe independent wrestlers as the standard for our sport. Don't be afraid to challenge what you read on the Internet and decide for yourself if a featured wrestler is worthy of his paycheck. Remember the wrestler who first piqued your interest in the sport and use him as a basis for your analysis. I bet that wrestler is over 5'6" and actually owns wrestling trunks and boots. If that doesn't work for you, use Ric Flair as the standard. He's not the largest wrestler, but he's the best overall professional wrestler of the modern era. He should be the icon by which standards are set. Now, compare the latest "flavor of the day" to "'Naitch." I bet there is no comparison.

Keep this in mind as you read through the list. I hope it makes you really think about the future and next year's rankings. Someone besides me must start taking the future into consideration. □



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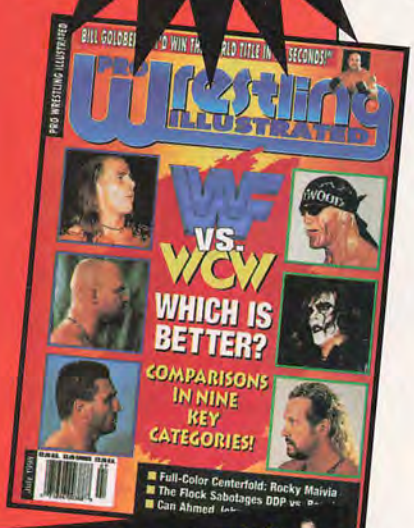

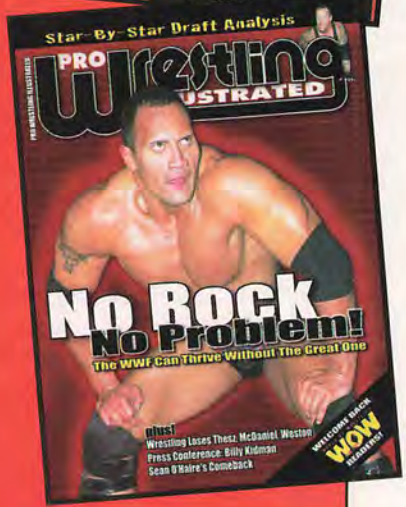

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press conference...

For all tough talk, Muhammad Hassan never won anything of note during his stint with Raw. He feels the World title is his destiny, but he was unable to take down Shelton Benjamin for the Intercontinental gold.

Muhammad HASSAN

IT HASN'T BEEN the easiest road for Muhammad Hassan. The 25-year-old Arab-American superstar emerged on the WWE scene in late-2004 and very quickly became one of the sport's most hated competitors. Alongside valet/manager/interpreter Khosrow Daivari, Hassan managed to infuriate practically every WWE fan and alienate himself from everyone in the Raw locker room. In fact, when he entered the ring for this year's Royal Rumble, all eight competitors that had already entered joined forces to eliminate him. And despite Hassan's formidable in-ring skills, it wasn't for fear of the Syracuse, New York, native that made him the focus of the other wrestlers' anger. Instead, his anti-American rants have made him the hated superstar that he is.

Since joining WWE, Hassan has done nothing but complain about how he is constantly discriminated against for being an Arab-American in the post-9/11 world. While that might very well be the case, Hassan has not tried to do anything to win the favor of any WWE fan or any of his fellow wrestlers. He has pointed fingers at every current superstar from Shawn Michaels to John Cena, and has managed to raise the ire of such legends as Jerry Lawler, Sgt. Slaughter, Steve Austin, and Hulk Hogan, going so far as to goad all but Austin into matches.

Hassan was recently drafted by Theodore Long to join the Smackdown roster, where a new future awaits him. He scored an impressive debut victory over The Big Show (albeit with outside interference from Matt Morgan) and was immediately put into the six-man elimination match for a shot at the World championship. Unfortunately for Hassan, old habits die hard, and he decided to pick a fight with, of all people, The Undertaker. It was this foolish move, as Undertaker went ballistic on Hassan, blasting him with a steel chair and chasing him from the ring.

To the outside observer, it might seem that Hassan has a death wish or is simply insane. However, our team of reporters—Senior Writers Harry Burkett and Will Welsh and Contributing Writer Jason Langin—met with Hassan before a recent ***Smackdown*** *taping to try to uncover the truth about his motivation inside the squared circle.*

HARRY BURKETT: Thank you for giving us this time, Mr. Hassan. For months now, we have been looking forward to giving our readers the opportunity to get to know you better.

MUHAMMAD HASSAN: As if they would really listen. Your readers, the ones who *can* read, already have their mind made up about who I am. They won't pay attention.

JASON LANGIN: In defense of our readers, I don't think you've really given many people a chance to think anything but negatively of you. In fact ...

> **"Some men chase greatness, and once they achieve it, they don't know what to do with it. I will not have the same difficulty. Greatness and I will walk hand in hand."**

HASSAN: Is this how this interview is going to be? More anti-Arab propaganda?

LANGIN: No, but it is frustrating to hear you call every fan a racist when that is not even close to the truth.

HASSAN: If you watch the videotape of my WWE debut, you will see the fans booing me from the moment I appeared. They were intolerant of my dress, my faith, and my associate, Daivari. It was pure ignorance.

WILL WELSH: I won't argue with you. That was, in fact, exactly how it transpired.

HASSAN: Finally, someone who admits the truth.

WELSH: However, you could have changed that. You are an American and you chose to turn your back on your own country. You could have helped the Arab-American cause, yet you decided instead to play into the hands of ignorance and negativity.

HASSAN: I reacted like anyone would had they been put in the same situation. I challenge you not to do the same if you had been ...

BURKETT: Gentlemen, we're treading on very loose ground. Perhaps we could turn our attention to in-ring endeavors. You were recently drafted to Smackdown. Will that be a good thing for your career?

HASSAN: Without question. I achieved all that I could with Raw. I was undefeated on that program and had nothing left to prove.

LANGIN: I'm looking at some of the Raw reports right now. You were defeated by John Cena on TV. And then there was Chris Benoit, Shawn Michaels, and Shelton Benjamin.

HASSAN: You are wrong. Disqualification victories mean little. A man needs to put my shoulders to the mat to prove his superiority over me. And that will be the only way I would lose, for I will never quit. Tag team matches do not count, either. Those losses were the fault of Daivari. He is loyal, but he is not my equal in the ring.

LANGIN: We'll get back to Daivari in a minute. You lost convincingly to W W E

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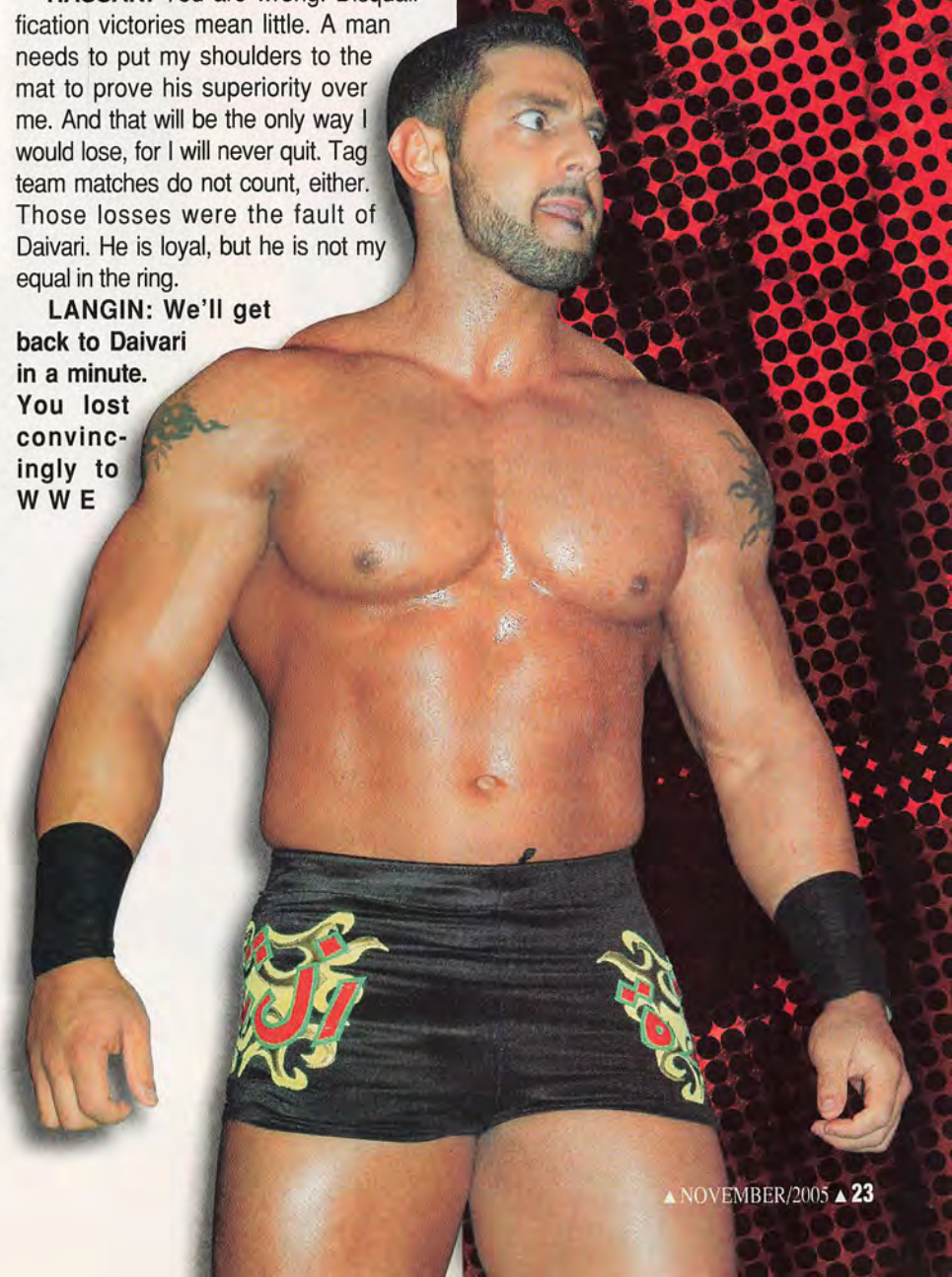
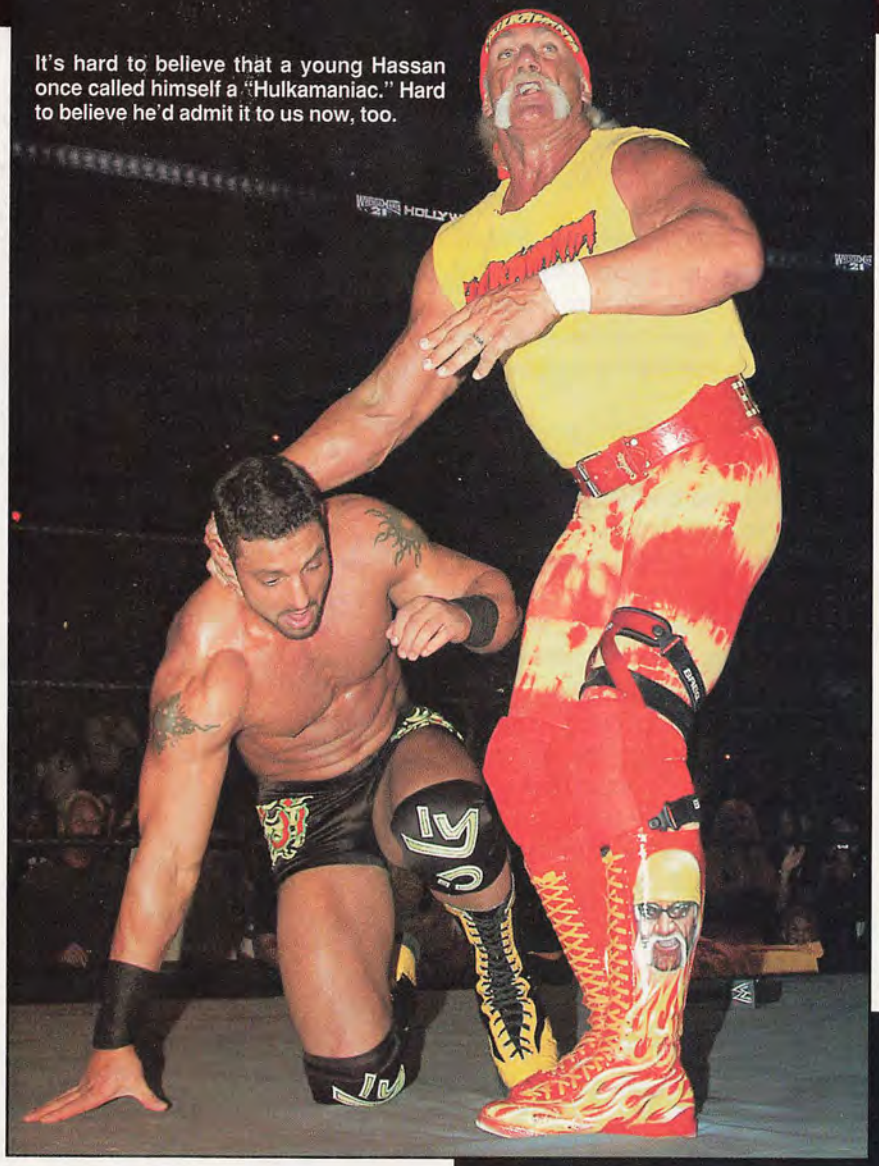




It's hard to believe that a young Hassan once called himself a "Hulkamaniac." Hard to believe he'd admit it to us now, too.

champion John Cena by pinfall on your last night on *Raw*. I don't think the match went five minutes!

HASSAN: Are you trying to get a rise out of me? It won't work. I am above this type of mudslinging journalism. I was not prepared to face Cena. If I had been, I would have taken his title.

BURKETT: But since you are with Smackdown now, what goals have you set?

HASSAN: To win the World championship, of course. I feel fortunate that Batista was drafted to Smackdown because now I have the opportunity to defeat him. A few months ago, he had the audacity to bloody me on national television. That is something I have not forgotten. He calls himself "The Animal." That is certainly what he is. An uncivilized human being with no right to carry around such a prestigious title. He was clearly afraid of my skills when he got himself disqualified.

WELSH: Then why start trouble with Undertaker? Isn't that counter-productive?

HASSAN: In retrospect, this seems like a bad move, not because I fear him, but because dealing with him will be a waste of time. Remember that when I joined Smackdown, there was no championship in place. It seemed only right that I should be facing the best that Smackdown had to offer.

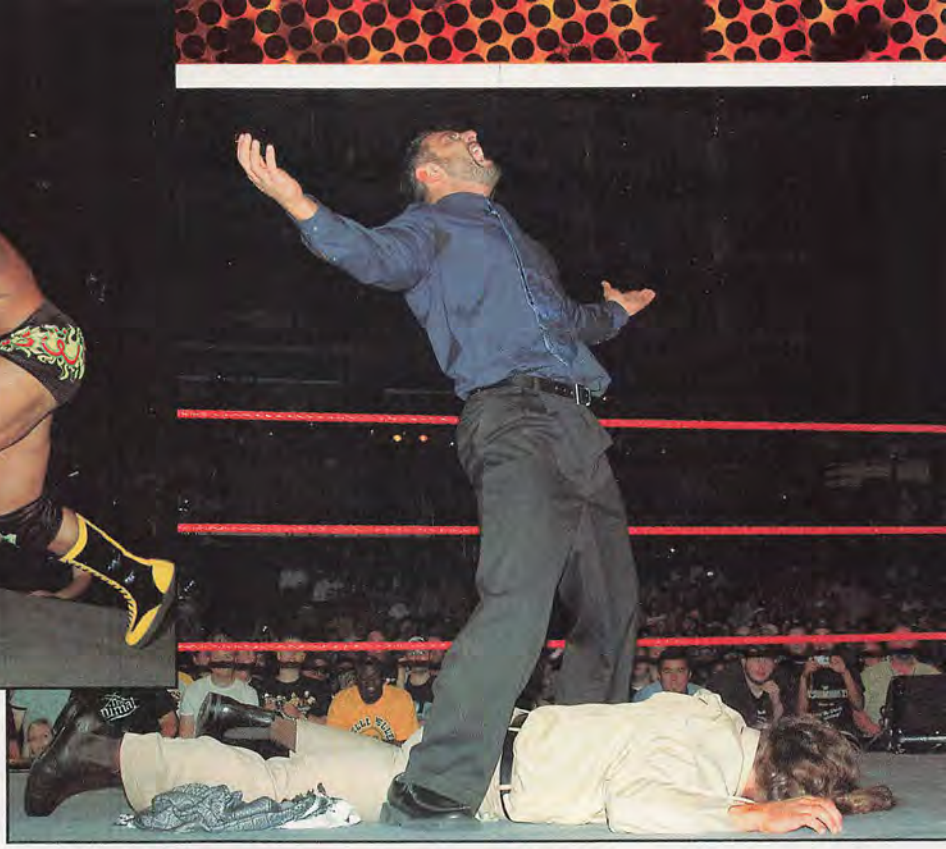
WELSH: Others have tried to take the same route and have failed badly. The most recent victim was Randy Orton.

HASSAN: I give Orton credit. He realized that in order to make a big impact, you need to overcome big obstacles, as I have. Unfortunately for him, he was not skilled enough to overcome such obstacles.

BURKETT: He is, however, a former World champion and the youngest one in history at that.

HASSAN: Again, I give credit. But once he won the title, he lost all of his

Hassan and Daivari first served notice that they were going to prove to be very dangerous in WWE by bloodying Jim Ross on *Raw*. Their complaints about discrimination and mistreatment continue.



Hassan held his own with Shawn Michaels during their feud (above) and even had a chance to embarrass him a time or two (right). Still, we won't believe he'll have an easy time humbling Undertaker and Batista until we see it.

momentum. Some men chase greatness, and once they achieve it, they don't know what to do with it. I will not have the same difficulty. Greatness and I will walk hand in hand.

LANGIN: Speaking of going hand in hand, let's talk about Daivari. What is his official role? Is he a manager? A valet?

HASSAN: Daivari is a loyal follower. He faces the same prejudices that I do, and he struggles with finding his place in the world. With me he has a safe haven to follow his dream. In return, I simply ask him to assist me on the path to greatness.

BURKETT: One would think he would perform well for Smackdown, being that it is the home to the cruiserweights.

HASSAN: Indeed. Daivari is learning more each day. I think one day he may be able to win that title with my guidance.

WELSH: I do want to address the situation of The Undertaker again. How do you propose to defeat such a legend?

HASSAN: I have defeated many of your so-called legends. Jerry Lawler and Sgt. Slaughter are both former world champions. I defeated both.

BURKETT: True, but both men are many years past their primes.

HASSAN: It would matter little. Greatness knows no age. I will also have my hand raised in victory when I face Undertaker. The day of "The Dead Man" is over. It is a new day in WWE. He will not choke-slam me. He will not give me the last ride. He will not tombstone me. He will fall victim to my superiority and beg for mercy. His pleas, however, will not be answered. And when I am victorious, Theodore Long will have no choice but to grant me a championship match against Batista.

LANGIN: You grew up in this country. I can only assume that you were a wrestling fan as a youth. Was there anyone who inspired you to become a wrestler?

HASSAN: *(Pauses)* It pains me to answer this question.

LANGIN: If you really would rather not answer, we have other questions.

HASSAN: No, I will answer, if only to show you the value of truth. As a child, I was, for a brief time, a full-blown "Hulkamaniac."

WELSH: You have to be kidding.

HASSAN: I wish I were. No, as a child, I was taken in by Hulk Hogan's message of peace and equality. As a child, I watched Hogan spew forth lies about being a real American and accepting of people of all backgrounds. I listened to that nonsense and started "hanging and banging" in the gym, putting together my superior physique. But in the end, he showed his true colors much like the WWE fans.

BURKETT: Why, because he rescued Shawn Michaels from a two-on-one attack at the hands of you and Daivari?

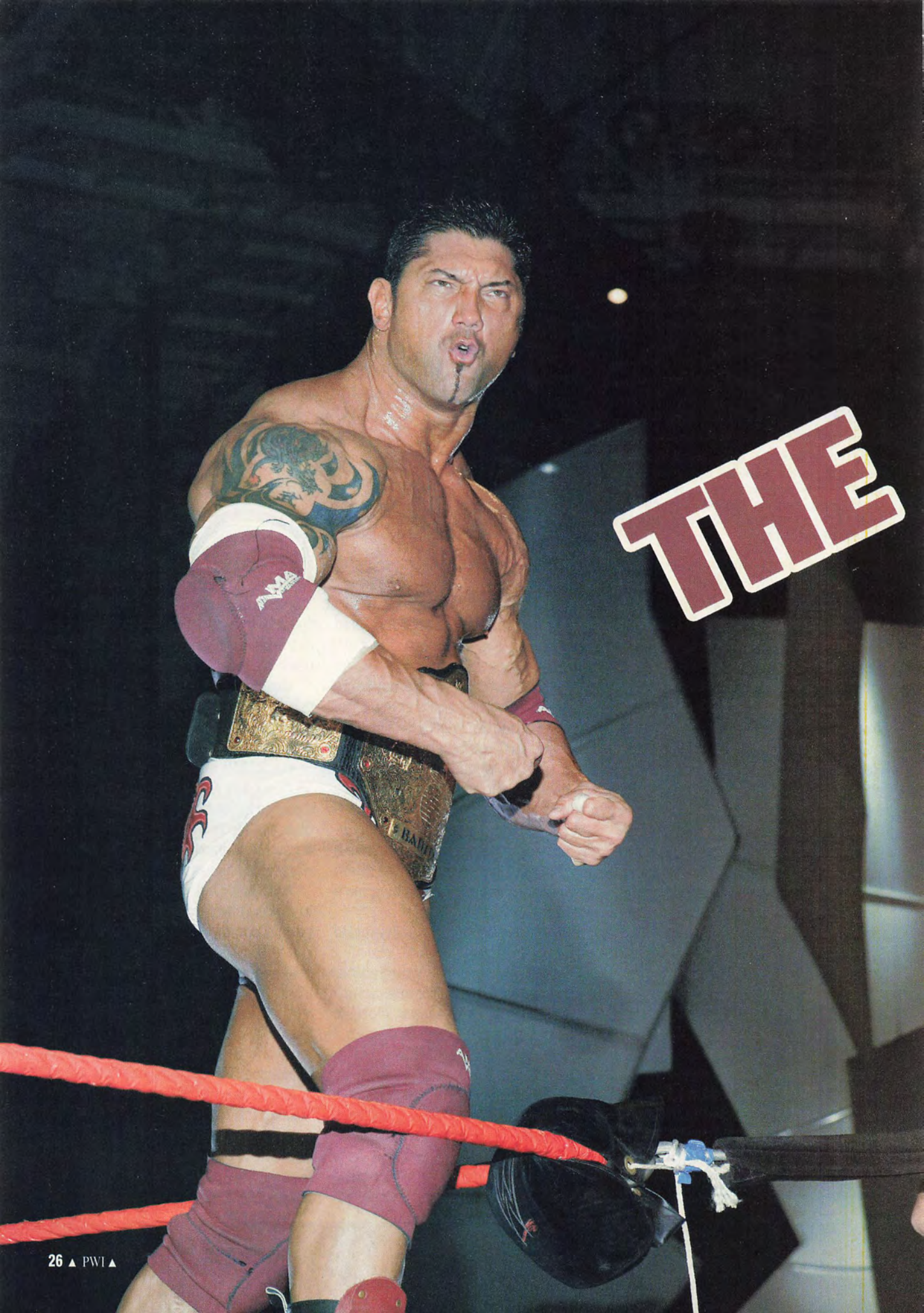
HASSAN: Because he bought into Michaels' lies. Because he can't see past the nose in front of his face. He claims to be a real American, but he is nothing but a fraud. And thankfully, I will not have to worry about him anymore.

LANGIN: Well, our time is drawing to a close and I wonder if you have any parting comments for our readers.

HASSAN: It is pointless, as I said before, but since I have this forum, I will try. If you are looking for a champion you can be proud of, support the great Muhammad Hassan. Cast away your ignorant ways and follow me on the way to excellence. Then you will see how wrong you have been all this time. I will be successful. There is no doubt in my mind.

WELSH: Thank you for your time and best of luck to you.

HASSAN: Only the weak and the foolish rely on luck. □


THE

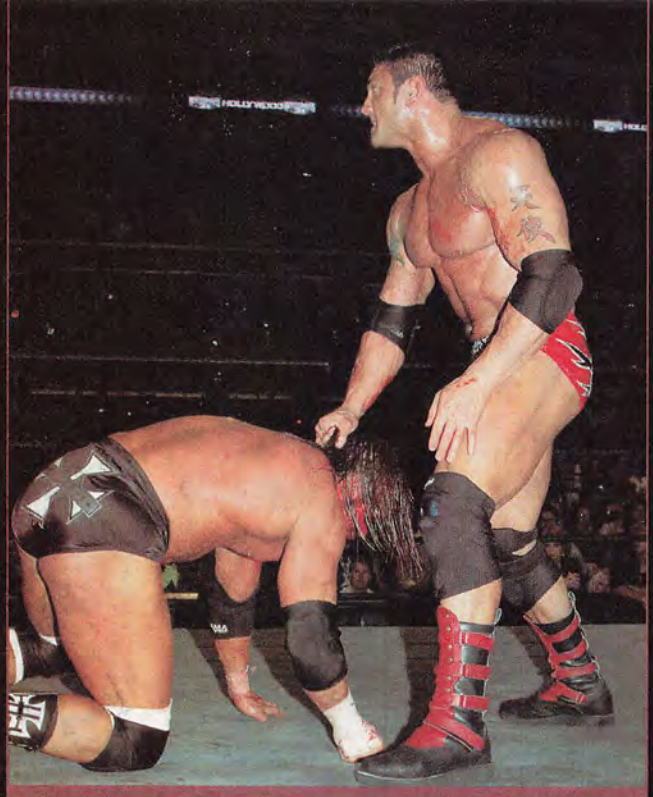
ANIMAL HAS EVOLVED!

Batista Cages This Year's Number-One Spot

By Will Welsh

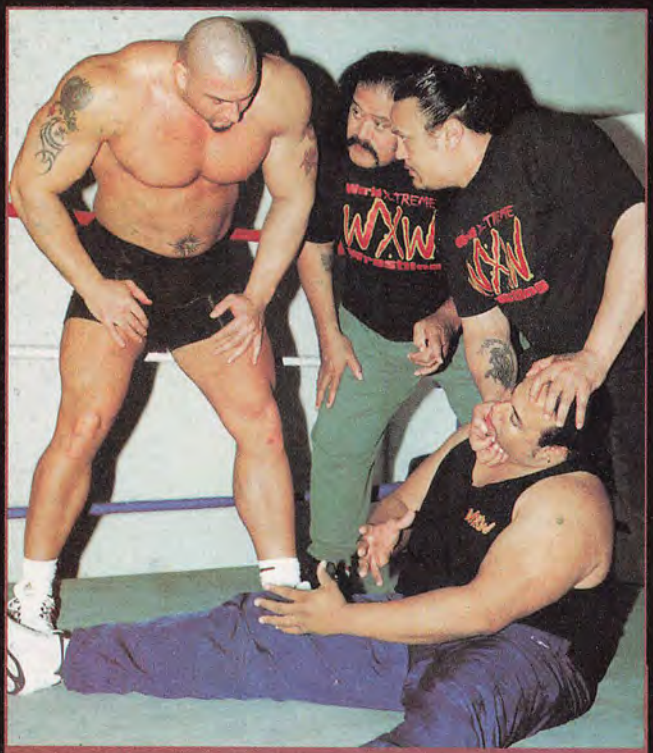
PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING HAS a reputation for being a sport promoted by carnival barker-types and championed by men so ridiculously outspoken and braggadocios that they can't possibly be taken seriously. It's a reputation that's been well-earned. Wrestling, at least the wrestling that we know today, was built on the back of exaggerated talkers like Hulk Hogan and Ric Flair. It achieved its greatest success while two of the most loquacious stars of any generation, Steve Austin and The Rock, reigned as its top draws. It's believed that a huge part of its future lies with the always-controversial John Cena, who has built his wrestling career on talking smack first and backing it up second.

How funny, then, that in 2005, the person to take home the top position in the *"PWI* 500" is one of the most humble, soft-spoken, and downright quiet champions the sport has ever seen. Dave Batista doesn't grab a microphone and deliver a lot of pointless banter. He doesn't drone on and on and on about his accomplishments, and he rarely spends much time bragging about what he's going to do in the near future. While other men with bigger names and more impressive track records try to impress



Batista capped off a special "500" year by beating his old pal Triple-H for the World title at WrestleMania. Actually, that wasn't the capper. There were still two more PPV wins over "The Game" to come.

crowds and their opponents with 15-minute promos that seem endless in nature, Batista quietly stares at his opposition, shares a telling smile or two, steals a knowing look toward the audience, and then commences with his planned beatdown the second his opponent's lips stop moving.



It wasn't too many years ago that Batista was just a baldheaded student of Afa the Wild Samoan and little more than a promising prospect. He's a bona fide star now.

Batista doesn't waste effort on trying to impress *anyone* with his verbal acuity or his penchant for wrangling giggles out of sellout crowds. All he does is hit the ring, size up his opposition, and destroy.

Yes, that's all he does—and he does it extraordinarily well.

In many ways, Batista's rise to the top of WWE is similar to Bill Goldberg's rise to the top of WCW. Like Batista, Goldberg was a quiet champion, and a champion created by the people. He didn't say much during his famous winning streak, and when he did speak, it was apparent that he meant for every one of his syllables to be heard. He let his wrestling—and his winning streak—do most of the talking, and we all heard him loud and clear.

Only after Goldberg started cutting promos did his career start faltering.

Batista talks more than Goldberg did, but not a lot more. He chooses words carefully. Every time he grabs a microphone, it's with a purpose in mind.

How very different he is from his mentor and the group to which he once belonged.

Have no doubt about it: Triple-H made Batista. When Triple-H picked Batista for inclusion into Evolution, he allowed Batista to become one of the few men to join his inner circle. He trusted Batista with secrets to which only a select few were privy, and he granted Batista special knowledge on what it takes to become a champion.

Batista, as the group's enforcer, took everything in ... quietly. He was the big man standing in the background, the overly muscled guy who would interfere on Helmsley's behalf if the champ stretched himself too thin, and the intimidating chap in the corner with one eye on Triple-H's opponent and the other on the referee. Sometimes he was very noticeable; other times, he was hard to spot. Every time he accompanied Helmsley to the ring, though, his presence was felt.

At the time that this was all going on, it appeared the relationship between Helmsley and Batista only benefited Helmsley. Batista's interference led to an untold number of wins for Helmsley, and it didn't seem like Batista had any motivation to be anything other than a glorified bodyguard. Who knew that the big, quiet guy was taking such copious notes? Who knew that he wasn't only capable of defeating Helmsley, but also of taking his championship?

SO WHERE DOES BATISTA RANK ALL-TIME?

Unlike some former top finishers in the *"PWI* 500," Batista didn't blow away the competition. Sure, he received the majority of votes from our editors and writers, but he didn't receive all of them—not by a long shot. John Cena, Triple-H, and JBL all received support for the top spot, and by the end of the meeting, there wasn't a clear-cut favorite. Batista, it seemed, was simply the best of a crowded field—which got us thinking about where he'd place if we compared him to the 14 previous "500" winners. Here's what we came up with:

15. Dean Malenko (1997). We awarded Malenko the top spot in '97 because of his overall wrestling excellence. We hadn't done it for that reason before and haven't done it for that reason since. What does that tell you?

14. Hulk Hogan (1991). Some people may think that we're being too harsh on Hogan, but take a look at some of the highlights of his winning year: He defeated Earthquake by countout at SummerSlam, last eliminated Earthquake to win the Royal Rumble, and defeated Sgt. Slaughter for the WWF championship at WrestleMania.

13. Rob Van Dam (2002). RVD didn't win a world championship during the grading period. He was simply the most consistently entertaining wrestler in the sport. However, some have called his placement as the top guy in 2002 a make-good for our decision to place him number two behind Steve Austin in 1999.

12. Bret Hart (1994). A loss to Jerry Lawler for using excessive force with his sharpshooter (please explain that to us), co-winning the Royal Rumble with Lex Luger (co-winning?), and a victory over Yokozuna for the WWF championship doesn't add up to an overly impressive year more than a decade after the fact.

11. Batista (2005). Batista had a good 12-month run during the "500" grading period, but everyone else on this list had a terrific 12-month run during their grading period. He spent too much of that stretch clouded in obscurity.

10. Sting (1992). Not to make too light of anything here, but all you need to know about the year that Sting took home the top prize is that he teamed with Abdullah the Butcher at Starrcade.

9. Steve Austin (1998). Austin started that year's grading period as a successful mid-carder and ended it as one of the most popular main-eventers from any era. His burgeoning success as a crossover star really pushed him over the top.

8. Diesel (1995). Kevin Nash had an astounding grading period, with a WWF championship run (won from Bret Hart) and successful defenses against Shawn Michaels and Sid Vicious. However, he remains one of the most criticized WWF champs of all-time.

7. Chris Benoit (2004). In 2004, Benoit finally claimed the top spot after years of us predicting it for him. His World championship reign was the high point of an exemplary career.

6. Steve Austin (1999). Austin was at the height of his popularity during this grading period, which may have made his year seem a little bit more impressive at the time. He did, however, beat Rock for the title, run off a string of impressive defenses against Rock, Undertaker, and Triple-H, and beat UT in a first-blood match.

5. Bret Hart (1993). Started off the grading period losing the Intercontinental title to Davey Boy Smith. Defeated Ric Flair for the WWF championship, with successful defenses against Shawn Michaels and Razor Ramon before eventually losing to Yokozuna. Rebounded with a huge King of the Ring win. Quality year.

4. Kurt Angle (2001). While still new to the sport, Angle beat Rock for the WWF title, defended against Undertaker and Triple-H, and even escaped from a six-way "Hell In A Cell" match with his title. A 30-minute ultimate submission match loss to Chris Benoit followed by another loss in a best-of-three-falls match to Benoit bring him down, though.

3. Brock Lesnar (2003). "The Next Big Thing" defeated The Rock to become the youngest WWE champion ever, forced WWE to reinvent itself by taking the title exclusively to Smackdown, defeated Undertaker in a "Hell In A Cell" match, won the Royal Rumble, and defeated Kurt Angle at WrestleMania to regain the WWE championship. If you can find anything wrong with that year, let us know.

2. Triple-H (2000). Claimed a victory in a six-pack challenge match against Davey Boy Smith, Kane, Mankind, Big Show, and Rock to win the WWF title, beat Rock in a cage match, handed Cactus Jack a loss in a streetfight, retired Cactus after beating him in a "Hell In A Cell" match, and defeated Rock in an "Ironman" match. He was Superman that year.

1. Shawn Michaels (1996). HBK reignited wrestling with his ladder match against Razor Ramon, last eliminated Diesel to win the Royal Rumble, defeated Bret Hart in an "Ironman" match to win the WWF championship, and retained against Diesel in a no-holds-barred match. 'Nuff said.

—Will Welsh

HBK: number one of the number ones!

Ferocity and intensity are two qualities that Batista clearly has in abundance when he's in the ring (above and below). That combined with the fact that he can be smooth and soft-spoken has endeared him to millions of WWE fans.

Batista watched Helmsley manipulate his way through WWE. He watched Helmsley use his stroke to gain preferential treatment. He participated in beatdowns of some of Triple-H's most respected opponents. He applauded Randy Orton's underdog win over Chris Benoit for the World championship, and then participated in a heinous three-on-one thrashing of the new champ simply because Helmsley couldn't stomach someone else in Evolution wearing the championship gold.

Batista knew all of this, and he sensed opportunity. Helmsley exposed every one of his weaknesses to someone he thought would always be his confidant—and then Batista took advantage of Triple-H's gullibility by defeating him on the biggest stage of them all.

Triple-H was stunned. So was Ric Flair. Batista, however, simply saw his championship reign as the culmination of months of planning and hard work. He had goaded the champion, gained his trust, and then destroyed him from the inside out.

Batista's WrestleMania 21 main event win was a masterstroke—one that only he knew he was capable of pulling off. It took a lot for Triple-H to trust him at first—and it took even more for Triple-H to trust him when Batista knew that Triple-H shouldn't.

By the end of their feud, it was obvious Batista had learned his manipulation lessons well.

For all the success that he achieved over the past 12 months, though, Batista's *"PWI* 500" year didn't start well. In August 2004, the man who would become number one was having fits trying to break out of the mid-card. He feuded with Edge, Chris Jericho, and Chris Benoit, losing more often than he won, and he needed the brass-knuckled assistance of Ric Flair to get past William Regal. Then, in October, he suffered a humiliating loss to former *Tough Enough* champion Maven. At Survivor Series, he was the first member of Team Evolution to be eliminated in their match against Randy Orton, Jericho, Benoit, and Maven.

Even Snitsky lasted longer!

Not long after that poor showing, however, something began to click for Batista: He suddenly realized that Triple-H needed him much more than he needed Triple-H.

This revelation didn't come easily. It took time for it to develop in Batista's head, and then more time elapsed before Batista actually believed it to be the case. He had a hard time wrapping his head around the fact that one of the reasons Triple-H was the World champion was because Batista allowed him to be. Once he accepted that, Batista began to openly challenge Triple-H's authority and picture *himself* as the World champion.

Batista started taking sidelong glances at the championship belt. He would pick it up and caress it—blatantly possessive of it. He'd chuckle when questioned by Triple-H or Flair about his interest in the title, which seemed to infuriate his partners in Evolution even further.

Then, on December 6, when Vince McMahon declared the championship vacant after a three-way match pitting Triple-H against Edge and Chris Benoit went to a no-decision the week before, Batista's race to number one began in earnest—and it was helped along by an errant Triple-H chair shot to Batista's head following accusations by Triple-H that Batista wasn't showing enough emotion about McMahon's "unfair" decision.

The chair shot was the wakeup call Batista needed.

The rivalry between the two partners escalated in

Randy Orton was the up-and-coming Evolution star who was supposed to break away from the group and lead WWE into the future. But fans decided that for now at least, they prefer Batista.

the next couple of weeks as Batista was entered into the six-man "Elimination Chamber" match to crown a new champion—and then earned the favored position of entering the match last by scoring the quickest pinfall in a series of "Beat The Clock" matches on *Raw*.

At New Year's Revolution, Batista was clearly the most dominant man in the chamber, eliminating Chris Jericho and Chris Benoit, but a low blow by Randy Orton—as well as Triple-H's decision *not* to interfere on his behalf—cost Batista his shot at the title. "The Game" went on to regain the belt, but it was clear that something had changed between the two men.

Batista, who was so close to winning the title for the first time, was no longer happy being a supporting player. And Triple-H, who for so long had undervalued the heavily tattooed behemoth, now stood in fear of him.

Triple-H did his best to avoid squaring off with Batista one-on-one. He vowed that he hadn't shied away from saving Batista in the "Elimination Chamber," and then he "mistakenly" helped Orton win a number-one contender's match against his Evolutionary mate. When Batista earned the right to challenge for either the World or WWE championship by winning the Royal Rumble, Triple-H talked up the potential matchup with then-WWE champion JBL as if it were a can't-miss opportunity.

Helmsley even went so far as to orchestrate a near hit-and-run on Batista, using JBL's limousine in order to lay blame on Layfield and ensure that Batista would choose *him* for his WrestleMania opponent. Unfortunately for Helmsley, the night that Batista had to decide which contract to sign, he overheard "The Game" tell Flair that he was responsible for nearly running Batista down.

The match was on.

Batista vs. Triple-H at WrestleMania 21 wasn't an all-time classic. Those who remember it vividly years from now will be few and far between. It was, however, the match that propelled Batista into the sport's upper echelon.

Win a major title at WrestleMania and you'll always be somebody.

The next couple of months, however, were what really propelled Batista to the top of this year's "500." Not only did he retain his title in convincing fashion against all sorts of opponents, he also helped Jim Ross to a win over Triple-H, retained the title against Helmsley at Backlash, and cemented his reputation as one of the sport's toughest competitors by again defeating Helmsley in one of the most barbaric "Hell In A Cell" matches we've ever seen. By the time he was sent to Smackdown courtesy of the draft lottery, he had survived everything Triple-H and the rest of the Raw roster could throw at him—which is why he's this year's top man in the *"PWI* 500." □

What a destructive force "The Animal" has been in recent months. He could easily repeat as top man in the "500" next year if he decimates the Smackdown roster.

PWI 500

TWO-MAN RACE IN 2005

IF YOU'RE LOOKING for an indication as to what the *"PWI* 500" might end up looking like in any given year, just wait until WrestleMania has played itself out. In case you hadn't been paying close attention, really big stuff happens at WrestleMania every year. Title chases come to an end. Feuds hit their climax. Matches of the Years take place.

Until the last few years, you could count on the winner of the main event of WrestleMania to be one of the heavy favorites to earn the top spot in the *"PWI* 500" a few months later. Almost certainly, the winner of that main event would have either won or successfully defended the WWE World championship.

But since the advent of the brand extension, things have gotten just a touch more complicated. Now we have two brands and two champions and both a WWE and a World title match at WrestleMania to consider. So WWE must decide which title match should go on last as the *true* main event. In 2005, Triple-H vs. Batista for the World title got the nod over JBL vs. John Cena for the WWE title. But two new champions were crowned on April 2 in Los Angeles. And these two new champions won cleanly. And they have reigned as champions right up until press time for this magazine and through the remainder of the "grading period" for this version of the "500."

In spite of the tease on the cover, the race for the top spot wasn't all that wide-open in 2005. With apologies to Satoshi Kojima, who in 2005 became the first man to hold the All-Japan Triple Crown and the IWGP heavyweight titles simultaneously, virtually all of us at *PWI* agreed that it came down to Batista and Cena. Batista or Cena? Cena or Batista?

There was a lot of hedging, a little bit of vacillating, and quite a few sets of hands thrown up in the air as we conducted our debate over which most deserved to be numero uno. Granted, neither man will blow anyone away with his technical expertise, but they both found ways to win a lot during the last year ... against a high grade of competition ... and they both sure influenced the sport (in good ways).

Cena could have gotten the nod because he had a run with a secondary title (U.S.) before winning one of the two big belts at 'Mania. But that Royal Rumble victory for Batista—which just so happened to see him eliminate Cena in the end—had to count for a lot. Plus his three decisive PPV wins over Triple-H were huge.

So Batista is our guy. But it will go down as one of the closest two-man races in *"PWI* 500" history. *Hmmmmmm,* maybe we could find out who really is the better man sometime fairly soon. Maybe a little one-on-one showdown. How does WrestleMania 22 sound to everybody?

* * *

Examining the criteria for the "*PWI* 500," you can see why we went with Batista. Those criteria are (in order of importance):

- Win-loss record
- Technical ability
- Influence on the sport
- Success against the highest grade of competition
- Success against the most diverse competition
- Activity

As always, keep in mind that the *"PWI* 500" is not a ranking for the calendar year January through December. The "grading period" this year runs from August 2004 through July 2005.

Any wrestler who has lost significant time due to injury can either be dropped from the list entirely (in which case he will be listed in "Farewell To The 500" with a disabled list—DL—designation) or receive a ranking that might not be commensurate with his abilities or the amount of success he enjoyed in a reduced time frame.

Feel free to offer your feedback. You can reach us with your comments at *"PWI* 500," P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or you can e-mail us at londonpub@kappapublishing.com (please write *"PWI* 500" in the subject field).

* * *

[Editor's note: The numbers in parentheses following each name represent the wrestler's height, weight, years of pro experience, and ranking in the 2004 "*PWI* 500." An "NL" means the wrestler was not listed a year ago. Following the ratings is a complete listing of wrestlers ranked in 2004 but not in 2005 *(page 88),* as well as an alphabetical cross-reference to the *"PWI* 500" *(pages 90-91).*]

1 BATISTA
(6'6", 318, 7, 20)

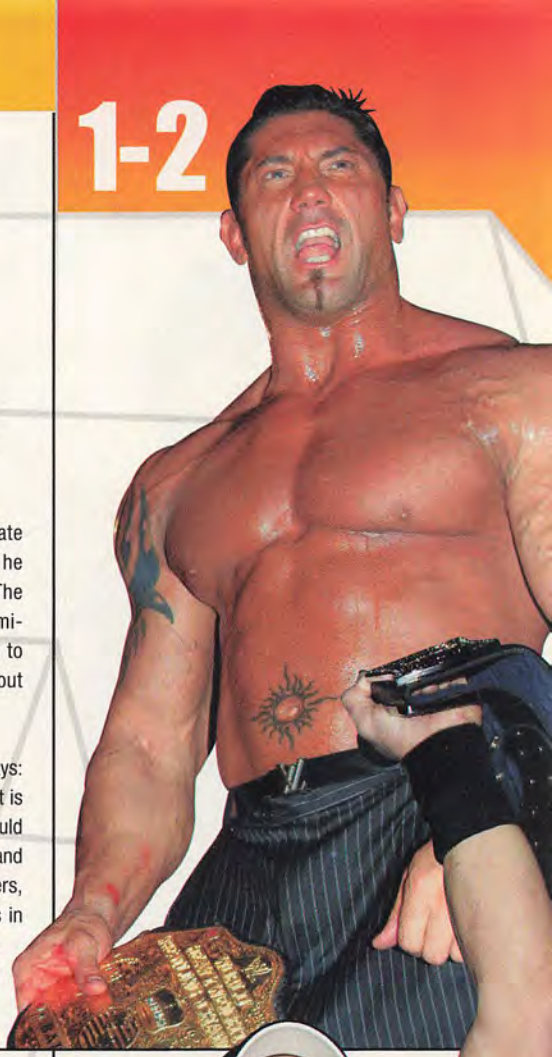
PATH TO NUMBER 1: 257 in 2001, 28 in 2002, NL in 2003, 20 in 2004.

TOP FIVE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR:

1. Pinned Triple-H to win the Raw World title in the main event of WrestleMania 21.
2. Successfully defended the title against Triple-H in a "Hell In The Cell" match at Vengeance.
3. Won the 2005 Royal Rumble to earn a title shot at WrestleMania.
4. Surprised Triple-H at the title contract signing by staying with Raw rather than jumping to Smackdown.
5. Successfully defended the title against Triple-H at Backlash.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 1: The long-simmering ill will between Triple-H and his Evolution teammate Batista finally came to a boil leading up to WrestleMania ... Not only did Batista win the title, but he also became WWE's most popular wrestler ... Has been on an incredible hot streak ever since The Royal Rumble ... Demon Bomb power bomb never fails to put opponents away ... Batista has dominated Triple-H as no one has ever done, though how he will fare against other opponents remains to be seen ... Has greatly improved his cardiovascular conditioning over the past few months without sacrificing any of his Herculean physique.

WHERE HE'S HEADED: The move from Raw to Smackdown can be interpreted two different ways: Either putting the mega-popular Batista on Smackdown is an attempt to spike ratings on the program that is generally considered to be WWE's "B show," or WWE Creative feels that John Cena is the man they should promote as the company's top champion. Either way, Batista is WWE's dominant force. Like Goldberg and Brock Lesnar before him, he is a genetic freak who dominates opposition. Unlike those other wrestlers, Batista comes off as extremely intelligent, calm, and collected, and less prone to making critical errors in judgment. He also has a special charisma that should make him a hit on the talk show circuit, helping WWE score more mainstream publicity. If he can remain healthy and can adapt to facing smaller, quicker opponents like Eddie Guerrero and Muhammad Hassan, he should hold his title for a long time.



2 JOHN CENA
(6'3", 260, 5, 7)

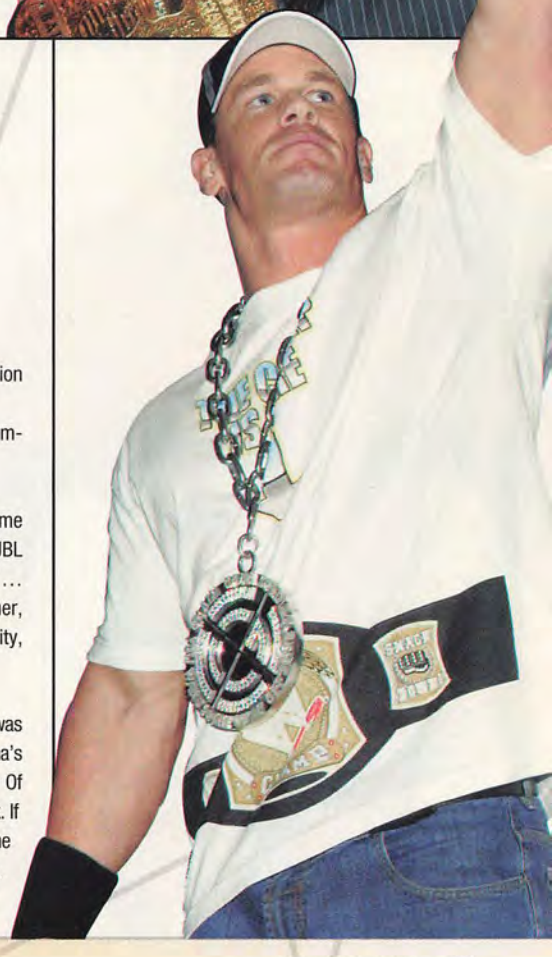
PATH TO NUMBER 2: 281 in 2001, 46 in 2002, 12 in 2003, 7 in 2004.

TOP FIVE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR:

1. Beat JBL to win the Smackdown World title at WrestleMania 21.
2. Retained the title in a three-way match against Christian and Chris Jericho at Vengeance.
3. Retained the title with a win over JBL in an "I Quit" match at Judgment Day.
4. Caused a huge commotion by being traded from Smackdown to Raw and throwing the World title situation into turmoil.
5. Was one of the last two men (and at one point appeared to win) the 2005 Royal Rumble before being eliminated by Batista.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 2: He says "his time is now," and it certainly seems to be ... Cena became Smackdown's top contender after a series of wins over Booker T, Kurt Angle, and Carlito ... Allowed JBL very little offense at WrestleMania in his one-sided title win ... Enormously popular with his "Chain Gang" ... Five-knuckle-shuffle setup may be the people's elbow of 2005 ... Has added more force to his FU finisher, torquing his opponent's neck and coming down harder on the slam ... Move to Raw gives him more visibility, and with that comes more pressure to carry the promotion.

WHERE HE'S HEADED: At this time last year, Randy Orton seemed to be the man WWE management was hoping could become the company's next megastar. Now it's a two-horse race between Cena and Batista. Cena's move to Raw gives him visibility, as does his hip-hop career and concert appearances. But Cena's "Doctor Of Thuganomics" routine has a tendency to divide fans. It's impossible to like Cena is you don't care for his gimmick. If he can continue to develop his skills and be judged more for what he can accomplish inside the ring than the smack-talking he does outside of the ring, then he may have potential to be a headliner for the next few years. But if Cena gets pigeonholed as "the rapping wrestler," he'll always be known for his gimmick rather than skills.



3 SATOSHI KOJIMA
(6', 243, 15, 109)

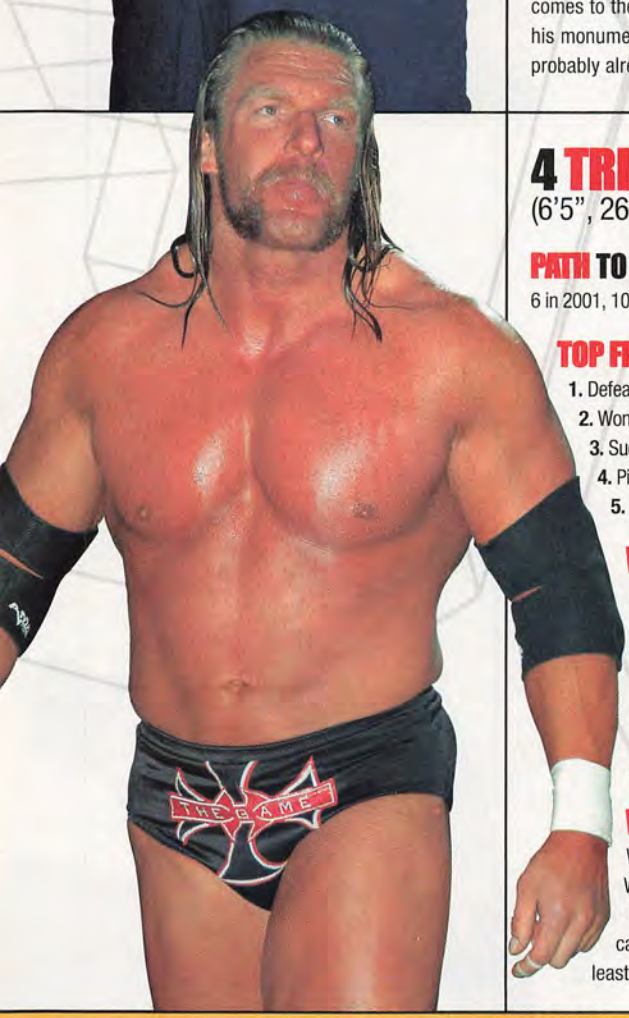
PATH TO NUMBER 3: 111 in 1997, 130 in 1998, 144 in 1999, 110 in 2000, 85 in 2001, 31 in 2002, 74 in 2003, 109 in 2004.

TOP FIVE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR:

1. As holder of the Triple Crown, he won Hiroyoshi Tenzan's IWGP heavyweight title on February 17, 2005, becoming the first man to ever hold both legendary titles simultaneously.
2. Won the All-Japan Triple Crown from long-reigning champ Toshiaki Kawada on February 16, 2005.
3. Had an epic match with Tenzan on May 14, 2005, where he lost the IWGP title but kept the Triple Crown.
4. With partner Kaz Hayashi, defeated Kensuke Sasaki and Katsuhiko Nakajima May 29, 2005.
5. Won the "A block" of April's Champion's Carnival tournament.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 3: Leaving New Japan for All-Japan years ago seemed like a career risk at the time, but it has paid off for him … The first man in history to simultaneously hold the IWGP heavyweight title (New Japan championship) and the Triple Crown (All-Japan championship), essentially creating the Quadruple Crown … Only managed to maintain it for a few months before losing the IWGP title back to former tag team partner Hiroyoshi Tenzan … Most important box office draw for the ailing All-Japan Pro Wrestling promotion since Toshiaki Kawada declared his free agency … Long overdue breakout year for this talented star … Was warmly received in the United States for his appearance in Ring of Honor a year ago against Homicide … Sometimes transforms into The Great Kosuke, a nod to fellow wrestler The Great Sasuke.

WHERE HE'S HEADED: Briefly unifying the All-Japan Triple Crown and the IWGP heavyweight title is the single biggest accomplishment in *puroresu* history. He can only head down from here, unless he comes to the U.S. and has similar success here. While his place in history is forever secure in the wake of his monumental win, there may not be a greater obstacle for his career to tackle, and his greatest year is probably already behind him.



4 TRIPLE-H
(6'5", 269, 14, 3)

PATH TO NUMBER 4: 225 in 1994, 84 in 1995, 79 in 1996, 31 in 1997, 24 in 1998, 26 in 1999, 1 in 2000, 6 in 2001, 10 in 2002, 2 in 2003, 3 in 2004, 4 in 2004.

TOP FIVE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR:

1. Defeated Randy Orton for the Raw World title at Unforgiven 2004.
2. Won the Elimination Chamber bout to regain the vacant World title at New Year's Revolution.
3. Successfully defended the World title against Orton at the 2005 Royal Rumble in a dominant performance.
4. Pinned Shawn Michaels at Taboo Tuesday.
5. Brutalized Batista with a sledgehammer after Ric Flair's Raw double-cross.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 4: "The Game" put a premature stop to Randy Orton's title run, but badly mismanaged his relationship with teammate Batista and it has haunted him ever since … Recaptured the belt once it was declared vacant by winning an Elimination Chamber match against Chris Benoit, Batista, Edge, Orton, and Chris Jericho … Has been in a major slump ever since losing to Batista at WrestleMania … Nonetheless, he is one of WWE's best all-around wrestlers and is doing everything in his power to surpass Ric Flair's mark of 16 World titles … Arguably in the best condition of his career, melding power with superior cardiovascular conditioning … History shows he always regroups when he's in trouble … Having Flair at his side keeps him focused.

WHERE HE'S HEADED: There's no reason to believe Triple-H is going to fall out of the World title picture anytime soon. He has been a consistent headliner ever since winning his first World title back in 1999. The cynics may credit part of his staying power to his marriage to Stephanie McMahon, but the fact of the matter is that Triple-H is a consistent performer who can handle the pressures of being on top. It's a safe bet that Triple-H will have regained the belt at least once before the year comes to a close.

5 JOHN BRADSHAW LAYFIELD
(6'7", 309, 13, 15)

PATH TO NUMBER 5: 301 in 1993, 210 in 1994, 327 in 1995, 150 in 1996, 173 in 1997, 102 in 1998, 78 in 1999, 87 in 2000, 45 in 2001, 36 in 2002, NL in 2003, 15 in 2004.

TOP FIVE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR:

1. Beat Booker T, Eddie Guerrero, and The Undertaker in a four-way World title defense at Armageddon.
2. Pinned Kurt Angle to retain the title against Angle and The Big Show at the Royal Rumble.
3. Survived WWE's first barbed wire steel cage match, stealing victory from The Big Show at No Way Out.
4. Successfully defended the title against Booker T at Survivor Series 2004.
5. Faced John Cena in a co-main event match at WrestleMania 21. Though he lost the match, he got to headline WrestleMania, which is a career highlight.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 5: While he may not be a wrestling god, JBL did manage to hold the WWE title for most of the past year … Showed a survivor's mentality and frequently—though reluctantly—defended his beloved championship against several competitors at once … One of the sport's top brawlers … His "clothesline from hell" has proven effective against the sport's top stars, and it may be the best clothesline finisher since Stan Hansen's lariat … JBL is a master strategist and has shown he is willing to pay a physical price to be the champion.

WHERE HE'S HEADED: Though Layfield still has plenty of detractors—particularly following his attack on The Blue Meanie at One Night Stand—even the critics have to admit he did an admirable job as World champion. That being said, with the red-hot Batista now on Smackdown, another World title reign seems unlikely in the foreseeable future. However, if Batista begins to crack under the pressure of being champion, Layfield is waiting in the wings. JBL is a safe choice for a top spot. The fans hate him and will get behind anyone who faces him. He is one of Smackdown's most valuable wrestlers.

6 KURT ANGLE
(6'1", 233, 6, 36)

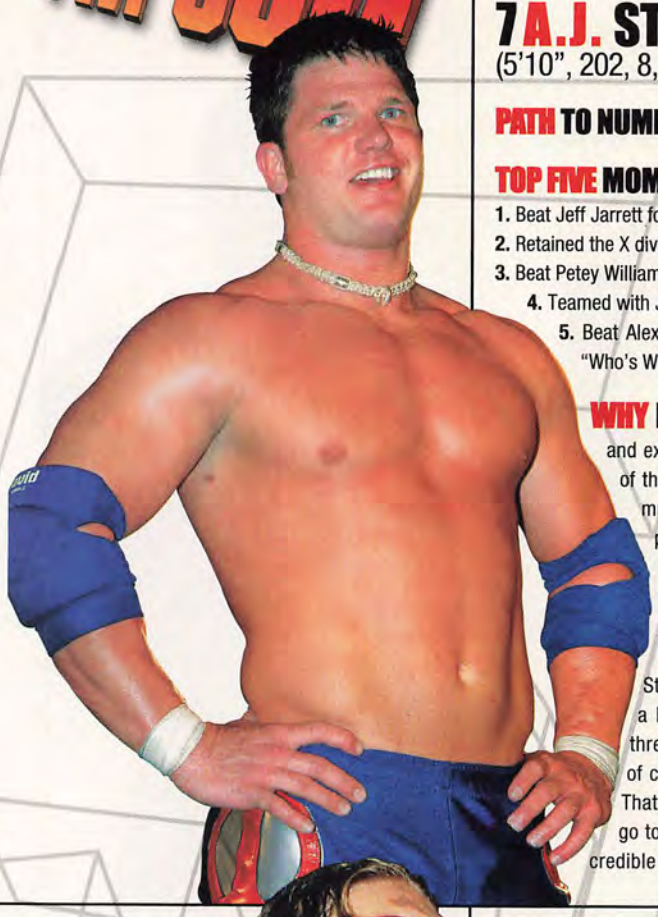
PATH TO NUMBER 6: 13 in 2000, 1 in 2001, 6 in 2002, 3 in 2003, 36 in 2004.

TOP FIVE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR:

1. Defeated Shawn Michaels in a battle of the legends at WrestleMania 21.
2. Knocked out The Big Show with a tranquilizer gun and shaved Show's head on *Smackdown.*
3. Led a contingent of Smackdown stars in an invasion of ECW One Night Stand.
4. Lost to John Cena in a closely contested number-one contender's match at No Way Out.
5. Lost in a three-way match to JBL and Big Show at the Royal Rumble.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 6: No one can knock Angle's skills, but he's suffered a string of big losses over the past year … Came out on the losing end of feuds against The Big Show and Booker T and was unable to win the Smackdown World title after several chances … In fact, his only real shining moment of the past year was his win over Shawn Michaels at WrestleMania 21 … Still, you can't argue with his skills … Continues to irritate the fans with his Angle Challenge … The Olympic gold medalist is a five-time World champion and is always capable of regaining the belt … His brief association with Luther Reigns and Mark Jindrak did little except hold him back.

WHERE HE'S HEADED: It's incredible to think Angle has only been in the ring for six years. These days, many industry analysts have hailed Angle as the greatest wrestler of his generation, and possibly of all-time. No one else can match his blend of technical ability, personality, comic timing, intensity, and dedication. But Angle has suffered some serious spinal injuries over the years. How long can he continue to compete at the top level before his body begins giving out on him? The jump to Raw might rejuvenate him and give him the willpower to mount a serious run at the World title. Like Triple-H, it's almost a sure bet Angle will regain a World title at some point this year.



7 A.J. STYLES
(5'10", 202, 8, 8)

PATH TO NUMBER 7: 458 in 2000, 199 in 2001, 70 in 2002, 11 in 2003, 8 in 2004.

TOP FIVE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR:

1. Beat Jeff Jarrett for his third NWA heavyweight title at Hard Justice.
2. Retained the X division title in an Iron Man match against Christopher Daniels at Against All Odds.
3. Beat Petey Williams and Chris Sabin an Ultimate X match to win the title at Final Resolution.
4. Teamed with Jeff Hardy and Randy Savage to beat Jarrett, Scott Hall, and Kevin Nash at Turning Point.
5. Beat Alex Shelley, Kid Kash, Amazing Red, Kazarian, and Chris Sabin in a veritable X division "Who's Who" to get a title shot at Victory Road.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 7: "The Phenomenal" A.J. Styles is one of the most innovative and exciting competitors in the U.S. today … Widely viewed as NWA-TNA's resident "star of the future," but has had to take a back seat to men like Jarrett and Monty Brown for much of the past year … A four-time X division champion and three-time NWA champion … Also held the Ring of Honor Pure Wrestling title … One of the most respected wrestlers on the independent circuit … Won The Natural heavyweight title with a win over Sabu and Teddy Hart in a wild TLC match in Buffalo in August 2004.

WHERE HE'S HEADED: After climbing from 458 to 11 in just three years, Styles has leveled off in the "*PWI* 500." He's certainly a top-10 talent, but his lack of a killer instinct is hurting him. Styles is now a three-time NWA champion, but all three of those reigns have only added up to about six months. Last year, he bowed out of contention for the NWA title so he could spend more time in his beloved X division. That's like Michael Vick taking time off to play in the Arena league. If Styles wants to go to the next level, he needs to make a serious run at the NWA title and put together a credible reign. Until he does, he'll never be a true impact player.

8 EDGE
(6'4", 240, 12, 59)

PATH TO NUMBER 8: 254 in 1997, 67 in 1998, 83 in 1999, 51 in 2000, 20 in 2001, 7 in 2002, 34 in 2003, 59 in 2004.

TOP FIVE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR:

1. Won the Money in the Bank ladder match at WrestleMania 21 to earn a future World title shot.
2. Won the Gold Rush tournament to earn another World title shot.
3. Teamed with Chris Benoit to win the Raw tag belts at Taboo Tuesday.
4. Went public with his relationship with Lita.
5. Pinned Shawn Michaels at the 2005 Royal Rumble.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 8: Edge decided the best way to recapture the momentum he lost due to his 2003 neck surgery was a heel turn—and his strategy has worked … Beating Shawn Michaels propelled him to the main event level … Shocked the fans—and Kane and Matt Hardy—by going public with his relationship with Lita … Has toned down his high-risk style, which has helped him better compete with main-event talent … Made some powerful enemies in Kane and Hardy and that has sidetracked him from his title chase … A five-time Intercontinental champion, former U.S. champion, and 11-time combined Raw/Smackdown tag champion.

WHERE HE'S HEADED: Just a few months ago, it looked like Edge could very well be on his way to winning the Raw World title. He had not one, but *two* guaranteed World title matches in hand. Unfortunately, Batista destroyed his momentum by squashing him on *Raw* and forcing Edge to regroup. Then, when John Cena showed up with the Smackdown World title, it looked like Edge may well get his chance, as he matches up much better with Cena than Batista. However, the reappearance of Matt Hardy virtually ensures that Edge will spend the next few months feuding with Hardy over the Lita situation. As long as he's got Lita—and all the baggage she brings with Kane and Hardy—Edge has no shot of winning a World title.

9 SHELTON BENJAMIN
(6'2", 245, 5, 16)

PATH TO NUMBER 9: 153 in 2001, 132 in 2002, 30 in 2003, 16 in 2004.

TOP FIVE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR:

1. Beat Chris Jericho to win the Intercontinental title at Taboo Tuesday.

2. Nailed Edge with an incredible exploder suplex off the top of a ladder during the Money in the Bank match at WrestleMania 21. Though Edge won the match, Benjamin was the one everyone was talking about when the match ended.

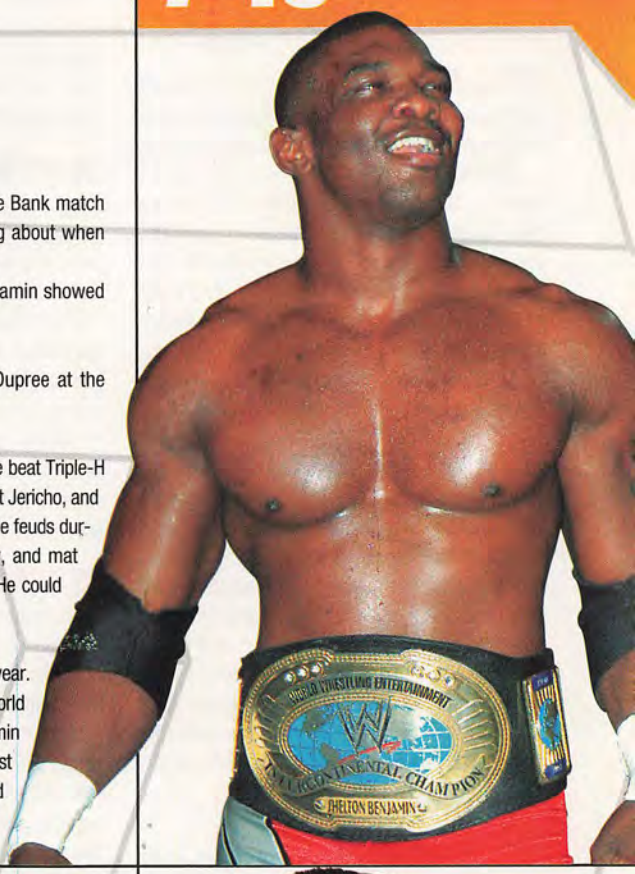
3. Lost to Shawn Michaels in a Match of the Year candidate bout on *Raw* on May 2, 2005. Benjamin showed he can compete with a WWE legend in a stellar bout.

4. Destroyed—and humiliated—Maven in a I-C title defense at New Year's Revolution.

5. Briefly reunited with World's Greatest Tag Team partner Charlie Haas to eliminate Rene Dupree at the 2005 Royal Rumble.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 9: Former collegiate champion has been making waves ever since he beat Triple-H in his *Raw* debut … Won the fan balloting at Taboo Tuesday to earn a Intercontinental title shot against Jericho, and made the most of it … Held the I-C title for almost seven months, but didn't have too many high-profile feuds during that time, so he hasn't received the acclaim he truly deserves … Incredible balance, agility, and mat wrestling skills … Defended that belt against Jericho, Maven, Muhammad Hassan, and others … He could use some more matches against Michaels or Jericho before making a run for the World title.

WHERE HE'S HEADED: Benjamin is in prime position to be one of the breakout stars of this year. After such an impressive Intercontinental title reign, Benjamin is ready to step up and contend for a world championship. However, with Batista and John Cena holding WWE's two heavyweight titles, Benjamin may have to wait a while before he gets his chance. A rulebreaking turn may be in the cards, or at least a more aggressive attitude to force a title match against Cena. With his incredible athleticism and ongoing improvement, he could well replace Randy Orton as the company's future heir apparent.



10 HIROYOSHI TENZAN
(6', 248, 15, 11)

PATH TO NUMBER 10: 61 in 1996, 96 in 1997, 63 in 1998, 72 in 1999, 100 in 2000, 84 in 2001, 90 in 2002, 57 in 2003, 11 in 2004.

TOP FIVE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR:

1. Avenged his prior loss to Satoshi Kojima and captured his fourth IWGP heavyweight championship at the Tokyo Dome on May 14, 2005.

2. Made history with the first IWGP title defense in Europe, where he beat Scott Norton in Milan, Italy, on June 4, 2005.

3. Won his third IWGP heavyweight title from Kensuke Sasaki on December 12, 2004.

4. Lost the IWGP title, but not his honor, in an epic fight with Kazuyuki Fujita July 18, 2005.

5. Went 59:45 against Satoshi Kojima that proved his incredible stamina, February 17, 2005.

WHY HE'S NUMBER 10: Solidified his position as the face of New Japan by defeating All Japan's Satoshi Kojima (his former tag team partner) and bringing the IWGP title back to New Japan … The most important full-time star on the New Japan roster for the past year … Has emerged from Masa Chono's shadow and established himself as a main event superstar in his own right … Breaks opponents down with his chops and headbutts … Former IWGP tag team titleholder in New Japan with a half-dozen reigns to his name, mostly with Masa Chono as his partner.

WHERE HE'S HEADED: Tenzan finally has the chance to put his name alongside the legends of *puroresu* like Kenta Kobashi and Keiji Muto by staying on top for a long successful run with New Japan Pro Wrestling. The next year will be very telling for this impressive heavyweight, as he's been on the brink of greatness for years, and at last seems poised to make a run of it. If he can stay injury-free, he has a chance of rising even higher in next year's "500."

PWI 500

11 JEFF JARRETT (5'10", 230, 19, 12) For better or for worse, Jeff Jarrett has been virtually synonymous with "NWA champion" for most of the past three years … Lost the belt to A.J. Styles, who in turn lost it to Raven … Jarrett has formed an alliance with Rhino to injure Raven and reclaim the NWA title … Jarrett has won major titles in every promotion he has ever competed in and is a four-time former WCW World champ … Recruited Scott Hall and Kevin Nash as The Kings of Wrestling, but the plan blew up in his face … Still uses the stroke as his finisher—that is, when he's not bashing people with his guitars.

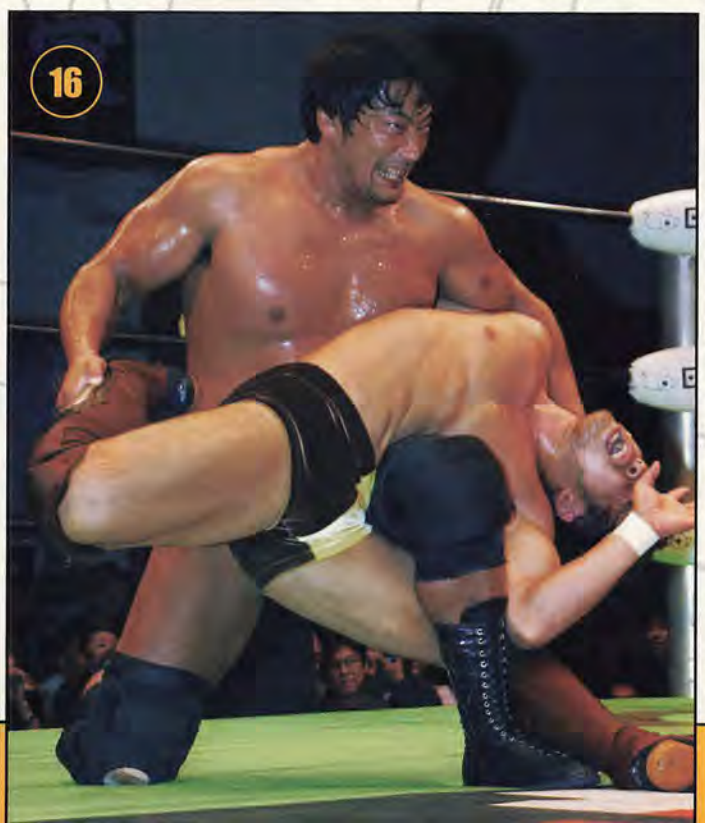
12 ULTIMO GUERRERO (6', 200, 15, 94) Top *rudo* of Mexico's CMLL, he is the most recognizable member of Los Guerreros del Infierno, a large stable that also includes his regular partner, Rey Bucanero … Incredibly strong and durable wrestler whose matches this year against men like El Hijo del Santo and Mistico drew rave reviews … First wrestled under the name Condor Dorado … A former CMLL tag team champion, he currently holds CMLL's light heavyweight title … One of the few men to ever win a 16-man cibernetico tournament … His reverse superplex from the top turnbuckle is a thing of beauty.

13 CHRIS BENOIT (5'10", 224, 19, 1) Last year's number one has struggled a bit since losing the World title to Randy Orton … Last year we wondered if "the fact that he has finally attained his lifelong dream (will) weaken his resolve" … Maybe it has, as "The Rabid Wolverine" has dropped out of title contention … Drafted from Raw to Smackdown … Competed in the "Money In The Bank" ladder match at WrestleMania 21 … Became a standard-bearer for the resurrected ECW in the spring of 2005 and beat Eddie Guerrero at One Night Stand … Benoit is considered by many to be the sport's top technician and one of wrestling's most intense competitors.

14 REY MISTERIO JR. (5'3", 173, 14, 22) For years, everyone said the only thing keeping Rey from winning a world title was his size. Now it seems the only thing holding him back is Eddie Guerrero … Scored a huge win over Eddie at WrestleMania 21 … That win should have propelled him into contention for the WWE or World title … Instead, Rey remained loyal to Eddie, and the opportunity passed him by … Tormented by Eddie over some secret concerning his son … Still the standard by which all other cruiserweights are measured … Beat old ECW and AAA rival Psicosis at One Night Stand … His 619 and West Coast pop guarantee a crowd reaction.

15 EDDIE GUERRERO (5'8", 223, 17, 2) Last year's number-two man has been in a rut ever since dropping the Smackdown title to JBL at the 2004 Great American Bash … Took a conscious step away from the World title picture and formed a team with Rey Misterio Jr., but Eddie seemed to resent Rey and challenged him to a match at WrestleMania 21 … Eddie lost, and after months of sulking, Eddie has finally become a full-fledged rulebreaker and is threatening to reveal some secret about Rey's son … Wrestling with more intensity than he has in years, but it's hard to tell if he's still interested in regaining a World title or if he has his own sinister agenda.

16 KENTA KOBASHI (6'2", 262, 17, 4) Japanese fans have called him "the perfect champion" thanks to his recently ended two-year reign as NOAH's Global Honored Crown champion … Lost the title to Takeshi Rikioh, who has had a hard time filling Kobashi's boots … Has recovered from more knee surgeries than anyone cares to count … One of the single most popular performers of the last decade … Knocks opponents flat with his rough lariat … A three-time former Triple Crown champion during his time with All-Japan Pro Wrestling … Originated the burning hammer, an upside-down version of the Death Valley driver that ends like a brainbuster.



17 CHRISTOPHER DANIELS (6', 210, 12, 25) "The Fallen Angel" finally captured the NWA-TNA X division title at Destination X, but missed out on a match against his arch-rival A.J. Styles for the NWA title when Styles dropped the belt to Raven … One of the most decorated wrestlers on the independent circuit … Beat Styles for The Natural heavyweight title in July 2005 in Buffalo … Always seems utterly relaxed in the ring … The only two-time Super 8 tournament winner … Daniels is a three-time NWA tag champion, a former ROH tag champion, and former 3PW champion … His so-called best moonsault ever may be just that … Other trademark moves are the Angel's wings and last rites.

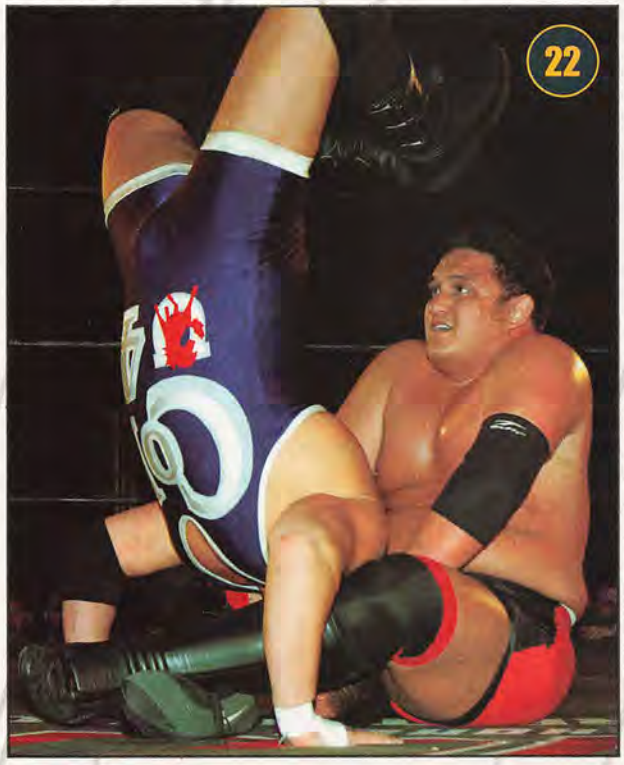
18 MISTICO (5'7", 177, 7, NL) CMLL's most explosive wrestler … High-flyer has quickly become the most talked-about Luchador active today … Clad in silver and gold, this young aerialist has become a bona fide main event star at Arena Mexico, the premiere venue in all of Lucha Libre … Sometimes teams with one of Mexico's other hot commodities, El Hijo del Santo … Second generation grappler is the son of Dr. Karonte … Not the first man to use the name Mistico, but certainly the most famous … Captured the NWA middleweight title and has defended it in breathtaking bouts against men like Averno and Ultimo Guerrero.

19 KANE (6'7", 326, 11, 13) We thought Kane's personal life couldn't get any weirder than getting caught inside a burning funeral home as a boy and that whole Katie Vick fiasco a couple years ago … Over the past year, Kane has injured Matt Hardy, married and impregnated Lita, feuded with Gene Snitsky over Lita's "miscarriage," and been dumped by Lita for Edge … Remarkably, throughout all that drama, Kane remains a top contender to the WWE title … Tombstone piledriver and choke-slam are match-enders no matter who you are … "The Big Red Machine" is still driven to surpass his one-day WWE World title reign in 1998.

20 BOOKER T (6'3", 250, 15, 24) The five-time WCW World champion has run the gamut of emotions over the past year, contemplating retirement, getting married, and coming out on top in an intense feud with Kurt Angle … One of the most decorated tag team competitors in wrestling, winning 11 WCW World tag titles and three WWE/Raw tag titles … His Book-end uranage and ax kick are formidable finishers, as Angle will attest … Having wife Sharmell at his side has brought out the best in Booker, but it might prove to be a liability in the long run … A versatile competitor who could easily contend for—and win—another world championship before he's through.

11-30

21 TIGER MASK IV (5'7", 178, 15, 84) Became the first man in history to win back-to-back Best of the Super Junior Tournaments this summer with a triumph in the finals over Gedo … Also holds the IWGP junior heavyweight championship, making him the division's undisputed kingpin … The fourth in a line of men to assume the mantle of Tiger Mask, he was preceded in the role by fellow New Japan wrestler Koji Kanemoto … In-ring style mirrors that of the original Tiger Mask, Satoru Sayama … Left his training grounds of Michinoku Pro for a full-time contract with New Japan Pro Wrestling in 2002 … Has invented a dangerous new move, which is a standing backflip into a double-knee-drop onto supine opponents … Likes to put away foes with the Tiger suplex.



22 SAMOA JOE (6'3", 290, 5, 34) The big Samoan is one of the most versatile wrestlers you'll find anywhere … Named the top brawler in the sport in *Inside Wrestling's* "2005 Insiders' Poll" … Since losing the Ring of Honor title to Austin Aries in December, Joe has gone on to dominate the ROH pure division … ROH's most prolific champion, Joe defended the title against the promotion's top challengers, including C.M. Punk. Homicide, Paul London, and others … Trained in shootfighting under Bas Rutten … Has an encyclopedic knowledge of chokes and submission holds, but also has incredible raw power … Debuted for TNA in June 2005, destroying Sonjay Dutt … Lost to Raven in an intense bout at a Warrior 1 Wrestling card in Ontario.

23 PETEY WILLIAMS (5'7", 179, 4, 178) Williams has had a remarkable year … The inventor of wrestling's hottest move, the Canadian destroyer, held the TNA X title for five months … He won the 2005 Super 8 Tournament, scoring wins over Rory Fox, Alex Shelley, and Puma … Thanks to his incredible finisher, Petey is getting booked all over the country … Won the NWA Upstate no limits title, beating Kevin Dunn … Also held the BCW TV title … The captain of TNA's Team Canada and one of Scott D'Amore's prized pupils … A superior mat wrestler and technician … Pound-for-pound, one of the best wrestlers in the world.

24 EL HIJO DEL SANTO (5'6", 170, 23, 14) Son of the most famous Luchador of all-time, El Santo … Teamed with the sensational Mistico a number of times this year—the two have developed into an incredible pairing … Mexico's most in-demand performer, this popular *technico* headlines shows all over his native country and the United States … Silver mask with teardrop-shaped eyes is among Lucha Libre's most recognizable … Learned his trade under the name Korak so he would be aptly prepared to accept the mantle of Santo … Recently held the CMLL tag team title with Negro Casas … *El caballo,* the camel clutch, is the submission finisher he uses to this day, as it was passed to him by his father.

25 CHRIS JERICHO (5'10", 225, 15, 10) Y2J seems to be unable to make up his mind: Does he want to be a wrestling champion or a pop culture celebrity? … The man who unified the WCW and WWE world titles back in 2001 spends more time playing with his band, Fozzy, hosting "The Highlight Reel," and appearing on VH-1 countdown shows than chasing title belts … You could see his heel turn coming a mile a way—that is, unless you're John Cena … Still a viable contender to any title he chooses to pursue … No one blends Mexican and Japanese influences with the American style better than Jericho.

26 THE UNDERTAKER (6'10", 328, 16, 23) "The Dead Man" overcame a major challenge at WrestleMania 21, beating Randy Orton to extend his 'Mania undefeated streak to 13-0 … Has wrestled a part-time schedule for most of the past two years … Dominated major feuds against Booker T, The Dudley Boyz, Heidenreich, and Luther Reigns in the past year, but was unable to beat JBL for the WWE title … A huge fan of mixed martial arts, 'Taker has incorporated several submission holds and chokes from MMA into his game, allowing him to work a style with fewer big bumps … Still considered by many to be the locker room leader of WWE … A perennial title threat.

27 KENSUKE SASAKI (5'10", 263, 19, 72) Former star of New Japan Pro Wrestling and WJ Pro has become an even bigger sensation since going freelance … A four-time former IWGP heavyweight champion and protege of Riki Choshu … Pops up in All-Japan Pro Wrestling from time to time, usually joined by his wife, retired wrestler Akira Hokuto … Former partner of Hawk in The Hellraisers, when he was known as Power Warrior … Sometimes wears a mask as Volcano … Singles victory defending New Japan against All-Japan's Toshiaki Kawada remains the crowning moment of his career … Favorite move is the Northern Lights bomb, a move invented by his wife.

28 MONTY BROWN (6'2", 275, 2, 101) Why, Monty, why? … No one can really understand the rationale behind "The Alpha Male's" decision to join forces with Jeff Jarrett when he seemed to be on the verge of beating Jarrett for the NWA title … Money talks, we guess … Former NFL linebacker has drawn comparisons to Bill Goldberg … Came of age by beating Sabu in an April 2004 falls-count-anywhere bout … Has since collected major wins over Abyss and Raven … Became the top contender to the title by beating Kevin Nash and Dallas Page at Final Resolution, but couldn't get the job done … Finisher is the pounce.

29 RANDY ORTON (6'5", 265, 5, 5) A year ago, he was WWE's golden boy—and now he's trying to slowly climb back to the top … Beat Chris Benoit for the World title at SummerSlam but lost it just a month later to Triple-H … Orton's natural cockiness made it hard for fans to cheer him … Began an on-screen relationship with Stacy Keibler, only to floor her with an RKO to prove a point to The Undertaker … Gave UT a stiff challenge at WrestleMania 21, but came up short, injuring his shoulder in the process … Third-generation competitor should become a major player for Smackdown once he's all healed up … Still has awesome potential … OVW finisher was a magnificent wheelbarrow suplex into a Boston crab that would look great on *Smackdown.*

30 CHRISTIAN (6'1", 225, 10, 31) Tyson Tomko may have been his "Problem Solver" for much of the last year, but Christian still seemed to get himself in his share of hot water … Considered by some to be one of the most versatile wrestlers in WWE … Three-time Intercontinental champion has also held the WWE/Raw tag team title on nine different occasions … Perpetually underrated by both fans and peers, but tirelessly championed by his vocal "peeps" … Deeply dislikes current WWE champion John Cena and challenged him to a "rap-off" at the 2005 Royal Rumble … Recently drafted by Smackdown, with which he could finally get his due as a main-eventer.

PWI 500

31 THE BIG SHOW (7'2", 485, 10, 41) Raw's resident man-mountain has lost a bit of his edge since changing his rulebreaking ways and being drafted away from Smackdown … Lost his hair to Kurt Angle and Angle's trusty tranquilizer gun … Show got revenge on Angle in the ring, but was unable to wrest the WWE title away from JBL … Show's erratic efforts have hindered his career for years, and the past year was no different … Was game enough to face sumo legend Akebono at WrestleMania and acquitted himself very well against the sumo grand champion, but most fans considered their sumo match a joke … Still has the most effective choke-slam in the business … Ought to slim down a bit to alleviate stress on his back and knees.

32 NAOMICHI MARUFUJI (5'11", 211, 7, 55) Top junior heavyweight of the NOAH promotion has turned into the company's breakout star over the last two years … His tag team with fellow junior heavyweight KENTA is a sensation in Japan that has been honored as the best duo by magazines, newspapers, and fans alike … Holds the GHC tag title with new partner Minoru Suzuki … Won the 2004 Super J Cup Tournament held by Osaka Pro, as well as the 2005 Differ Cup with KENTA … Known for his baggy pants and wild hair … Had some spectacular matches against Ricky Marvin and Juventud Guerrera … Quick high-flyer has a great dropkick and perfect suicide dives … Former junior heavyweight champion in NOAH … Finisher is the *shiranui*.

33 MUHAMMAD HASSAN (6'2", 230, 3, 136) The former Mark Magnus may have a point about being discriminated against, but he's certainly not winning any sympathy … Trained by Nick "Eugene" Dinsmore … Has become one of the most controversial characters in WWE in years, claiming to be a U.S. citizen of Middle Eastern descent facing prejudice in the aftermath of 9/11 … The cover story doesn't forgive his heel tactics or the persistent interference of manager Daivari … Usually weakens opponents' backs with chinlocks and abdominal stretches before applying his camel clutch … Still a bit green and hesitant in the ring, but what can you expect from a third-year wrestler who has already battled Hulk Hogan, Shawn Michaels, and Steve Austin?

34 SHAWN MICHAELS (6', 217, 22, 9) Is there any man who has better personified the term "intestinal fortitude" than "The Heartbreak Kid"? … Cumulative back injuries had Michaels looking at retirement in 1998, but since he has returned, he has regained the World title, beaten Triple-H, headlined WrestleMania, teamed with Hulk Hogan, and wrestled two Match of the Year contenders against Kurt Angle … He even re-formed The Rockers with Marty Jannetty for one night going into WrestleMania … Sacrificing bulk and muscle to streamline his physique and improve his quickness turned out to be a great decision … A true Hall of Famer.

35 LA PARK (6', 230, 23, 38) Former independent star has become a regular headliner for CMLL at Arena Mexico … Wrestled for years as the original La Parka, but litigation with AAA owner Antonio Pena over rights to the Parka name resulted in his new moniker … Was teaming with Shocker before Shocker departed for AAA … Former "Chairman Of WCW" still appears in the United States from time to time … Surprisingly agile for a man his size, he frequently dives from the ring with twisting planchas … Broke from Lucha tradition a few years back by revealing his real name of Adolfo Tapia to fans … Favorite finisher is the high-speed sunset flip called *yoshi* tonic, but he's best known for his skill swinging a steel chair.

36 PAUL LONDON (5'10", 205, 5, 82) The secret to London's recent singles success must be the fringe … Started showing a bit more personality, and his wild side, after splitting with Kidman and now wears Ultimate Warrior-esque fringed boots and a furry cape … Still won't forgive Kidman for walking away from their championship team … A beloved alumnus from Ring of Honor and the ECWA Super 8 champion in 2003 … Struggled in WWE early on, particularly in his first televised match, in which he was squashed by Brock Lesnar, but he has turned the corner … One of Smackdown's most exciting athletes, London is poised to be the face of the cruiserweight division for the foreseeable future.

37 ABYSS (6'4", 295, 6, 56) The man-monster surprised insiders by returning to TNA and brutalizing Jeff Hardy after seemingly parting ways with the company in January 2005 … Awesome brute power gives his choke-slam, black hole slam, and sit-out backbreaker career-ending capability … Willing to face any opponent in any kind of match, making him a promoter's dream and an opponent's nightmare … His look is a hybrid between the old Kane and Mankind … Lost a "Serengeti Survival" match to Monty Brown but beat Jeff Hardy in a "Full Metal Mayhem" bout … Won a 20-man "Gauntlet For The Gold" battle royal at Hard Justice 2005 to become top contender to the NWA title.

38 REY BUCANERO (5'11", 197, 14, NL) One-half of Mexico's hottest duo with Ultimo Guerrero, they are known as Los Guerreros del Infierno … Nephew of legendary Luchador Pirata Morgan … Learned the ropes as Morgan's partner before losing his mask and adopting a new ring style … Held both the CMLL tag team and trios titles in the past … Bounced back nicely from a harrowing leg injury that sidelined him for a good part of 2004 … Briefly appeared with WWE during the heyday of its *SuperAstros* program of the late-1990s under the name Ray Ortiz … Sometimes dons face paint for his matches in Mexico … Has wrestled for New Japan Pro Wrestling, the Toryumon, and all over the globe … Almost always appears in multiple-man matches … Top-rope power bomb finisher is as solid as they come.

39 JUSHIN LIGER (5'6", 208, 22, 53) His horned mask and red and white attire are among the most recognizable in all of pro wrestling … "Thunder" Liger is easily the most influential junior heavyweight of the 1990s … Fared well in this year's Best of the Super Junior Tournament, but was defeated by ultimate winner and new rival Tiger Mask IV … Has held the IWGP junior title 10 times in his career, and an 11th title win here in the States isn't recognized in his homeland … Part of the growing CTU stable in New Japan … Has held titles in NOAH (junior heavyweight) and Osaka Pro (tag team) as well … Inventor of the Liger bomb and shooting star press … Revered for his precision palm strikes to the head and his lethal brainbusters.

40 C.M. PUNK (6'1", 220, 7, 89) And we thought *last* year was a breakout year for Punk … Emerged as the most popular wrestler in Ring of Honor, thanks in large part to his intense marathon matches against Samoa Joe and his impeccable mike skills … Became part of a bidding war between TNA and WWE and opted for the WWE deal … Beat Austin Aries for the ROH heavyweight title and then hastily left the building, turning heel and stealing the belt … Vocal about his "straight edge," drug-free lifestyle … Very versatile, Punk can go from being beloved to despised in about five seconds flat … Pepsi plunge has been an effective finishing move.

31-50

41 CARLITO CARIBBEAN COOL (6', 220, 5, 166) The son of Puerto Rican legend Carlos Colon had a huge year, showing up on *Smackdown* and beating John Cena for the U.S. title in his very first televised bout … Was recently drafted by Raw and won the Intercontinental title from Shelton Benjamin in his first Raw bout … Months earlier, he suffered an injury to his left shoulder but continued to be a focal point of *Smackdown* telecasts with his petition to remove Teddy Long as Smackdown GM … Showed a lot of moxie by interrupting the "Piper's Pit" segment at WrestleMania 21, though Piper and Steve Austin made him regret it … Was part of Kurt Angle's anti-ECW contingent at One Night Stand … Has made frequent appearances in Puerto Rico since making his WWE debut … Single-handedly made eating apples cool.

42 MITSUHARU MISAWA (6'1", 238, 25, 143) Started his career under the guise of Tiger Mask II in All-Japan Pro Wrestling before beefing up and joining the heavyweights … Founder and top star of Pro Wrestling NOAH … The definitive Japanese heavyweight of the 1990s, he is a former Triple Crown champion as well as a former Global Honored Crown champ … Still dons his familiar green and white tights … Wrestled in England and Germany this past year, a first for Misawa … Lost the GHC title to Kenta Kobashi in an instant classic back in 2003 … Regularly teams with Yoshinari Ogawa … Feared for his trademark elbow strikes … Inventor of the emerald erosion and the neck-crushing Tiger driver '91.

43 DR. WAGNER JR. (5'9", 216, 19, 162) Veteran CMLL *rudo* returned to the limelight after a sluggish 2004 … Became a favorite of Mexican fans after the death of his legendary father, the original Dr. Wagner, but his *rudo* style hasn't changed a bit … Won last year's Grand Prix Tournament at Arena Mexico by defeating Ultimo Dragon … Brother of fellow Luchador Silver King … Former IWGP junior tag champ with one-time partner Kendo Ka Shin for New Japan Pro Wrestling … Known for his brutal overhand chops and drop-kicks … Like many of Mexico's evil medics, Wagner is usually decked out in his all-white mask and singlet … Loves to make opponents tap out to his Wagnerlock, a rolling ground octopus hold … Signature impact move is the Michinoku driver.

44 WILLIAM REGAL (5'10", 255, 22, NL) The Blackpool, England, native is back in action full-time after dealing with serious health issues in 2003 … Recently wrote his autobiography, *Walking A Golden Mile* … Got his start in wrestling on the rough and tough British shootfighting circuit … A former Intercontinental champion, four-time WCW TV champion, three-time WWE European champion, and four-time Raw tag champion … His most recent pairing with Tajiri fell apart when Regal sided with Eric Bischoff's anti-ECW Crusaders … The move from Raw to Smackdown gives him a chance at winning the U.S. title … His British style is in vogue on the indy scene, so Regal might be on the verge of another solid push.

45 RAVEN (6'1", 243, 18, 35) The brooding loner finally "fulfilled his destiny" by winning the NWA heavyweight title at Slammiversary … One of the most charismatic performers and best interview men in the business … The inventor of "Raven's rules" bouts and his barbaric "Clockwork Orange House Of Fun" matches … It's remarkable that he can still compete at this level considering all of the punishment his body has taken through the years … Continues to feud with James Mitchell and Abyss … Evenflow DDT is probably the best DDT wrestling has seen since the heyday of Jake Roberts … Was sorely missed at the One Night Stand PPV.

46 TOSHIAKI KAWADA (5'10", 240, 24, 6) All-Japan Pro Wrestling's homegrown "Ace" announced that he had been working for years without a contract, and declared himself a free-lance operative this year … Former Triple Crown champion who made his name in the rings of All-Japan … Remained on with All-Japan after the NOAH exodus led by Mitsuharu Misawa … Sometimes appears with the offbeat Hustle group, a bizarre sports entertainment offshoot … Known for his trademark yellow and black ring attire and his signature kicks to the face and head … Has had classic matches with men like Misawa, Kenta Kobashi, Hiroshi Hase, and Genichiro Tenryu … His favorite hold is the stretch plum, a head and arm submission … Finishing move is the brainbuster.

47 HECTOR GARZA (5'10", 202, 13, 19) Former top star of AAA moved to CMLL in the past year, where he's among the promotion's most despised *rudos* … This doesn't stop the cheers from his loyal contingent of female fans … Forms La Furia del Norte along with El Terrible and Tarzan Boy … Stint with TNA in the United States came to an end when Garza encountered some border-crossing drug problems … Son of Luchador Humberto Garza … First gained fame here during the heyday of the WCW cruiserweight division on *Nitro* years ago, when he was renowned for his daring corkscrew plancha from the turnbuckle to the floor … Appeared in a trios match at the 1997 Royal Rumble … Has a beautiful Cancun tornado press and a picture-perfect moonsault press.

48 CHAVO GUERRERO JR. (5'7", 210, 12, 17) Second-generation Luchador established himself as the elder statesman of the WWE cruiserweight division … Was embraced by the fans after returning from a concussion suffered at the hands—or should we say, the knees—of Billy Kidman, courtesy of an errant shooting star press, but quickly returned to his lying, cheating, and stealing ways … Never fully recovered from his loss to Uncle Eddie Guerrero at the 2004 Royal Rumble … Four-time WCW/WWE cruiserweight champion now calls himself Kerwin White, but we'll see if that lasts … Has also competed in both Mexico and Japan.

49 TAJIRI (5'7", 224, 11, 42) They say when a door closes, a window opens, and when Tajiri's team with William Regal started to run out of steam, the ECW reunion earned him a fresh push … "The Japanese Buzzsaw" got a chance to renew his epic rivalry with Super Crazy at One Night Stand … Fared well for himself in a pair of ECW rules bouts against Chris Benoit on *Raw* prior to the PPV … An accomplished kickboxer, Tajiri is a former U.S., cruiserweight, and ECW TV champion … Winning the Raw tag belts with Regal in Japan was a career highlight … Green mist and more toxic black mist are just as dangerous as his vicious roundhouse kicks to the head.

50 RON KILLINGS (6'1", 230, 8, 18) "The Sun-Tanned Superman" has dropped 32 spots since last year, mostly because he hasn't been challenging for the NWA heavyweight title recently … A two-time NWA champion and former WWF hardcore champion, as well as an NWA tag champ … The first African-American NWA heavyweight champion … Beat Johnny Swinger in the first round of The Natural title tournament at the Ballpark Brawl in Buffalo, then fought Abyss to a double-countout … Incredible cardiovascular conditioning … Part of 3 Live Kru with Konnan and B.G. James … Has perhaps the best scissors kick in the sport.

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51 RIC FLAIR (6'1", 243, 32, 30) The "Nature Boy" may be a bit older and quite a bit slower than he was in his prime, but he's still capable of taking most wrestlers to school … Semi-retired at this point, but we suspect Flair will always be climbing back into the ring for some stylin' and profilin' … Wrestled a tremendous bout against Kurt Angle in June 2005 … Seems content to be a mentor to Triple-H, but has proven capable of holding his own against WWE's elite … Now that Hulk Hogan is back in WWE, we have to wonder if we're finally going to see Flair vs. Hogan at a WrestleMania … Widely considered to be wrestling's all-time greatest ring general.

52 SHOCKER (5'8", 191, 13, 68) Charismatic CMLL star packed his bags and jumped to AAA in the spring along with his friend Vampiro … Gained tremendous mainstream visibility as the star of a McDonald's commercial this past year … Earned a spot in TNA and battled Christopher Daniels for the X title … Sometimes accompanied to the ring by his father, retired Luchador Ruben Soria … Has wrestled in Japan as well … Goes back and forth between the *rudos* and *technicos*, but nothing diminishes his incredible popularity … Lost his mask in 1999 to former partner Mr. Niebla … Former leader of Los Guapos, a now-largely defunct CMLL stable … Has a spectacular flying bodypress … Pet submission hold is a wild stretch known as *la reinera*.

53 SHINJIRO OTANI (5'8", 224, 14, 87) Became a headliner with Zero-One, and when that company crumbled, Otani opened up Zero-One Max, using almost all of the same talent … Now splits his time between the ring and running his new promotion … A former junior heavyweight with New Japan Pro Wrestling, he left after a dispute with Riki Choshu … Held the IWGP junior heavyweight title during the days of the eight-title J-Crown … Long-time partner of Masato Tanaka, Otani now leads his Otani-gun stable against Tanaka's Erotics … Pet submission is his cobra hold … Doesn't do as much flying as he did when he was 30 pounds lighter, but still has an awesome Dragon suplex in his repertoire … One of the most well-rounded athletes in Japan.

54 MATT MORGAN (7', 330, 3, 49) The former *Tough Enough* contender developed a *st-st*-stuttering problem in recent months … A former standout basketball player at Monmouth University … First WWE run culminated at the 2003 Survivor Series, at which he teamed with Brock Lesnar, The Big Show, and Nathan Jones … Returned to OVW, where he won the heavyweight title … Vowed to "never show his face in OVW again" if he lost to Chris Cage … After losing to Cage, began hiding his face under a mask as The Blueprint … Second (brief) WWE run ended with his release in July … Stall suplex into a Rock bottom variation is a visually stunning finisher.

55 BOBBY RUDE (6'1", 235, 7, 163) Spell his last name any way you like, it doesn't change the fact that Rude is the powerhouse of Team Canada … Held the NWA tag title with "Showtime" Eric Young … Trained by Val Venis and Shane Sewell … Became the first Canadian ever invited to participate in the Super 8 Tournament in 2002 … A native of Peterborough, Ontario … Used to compete regularly in WWE dark matches and appeared on *Heat* and *Velocity* several times … Held the BCW tag title with Petey Williams … Has competed throughout North America, from the Canadian Maritimes to Puerto Rico.

56 EUGENE (6', 226, 8, 21) The "wrestling savant" was almost fully recovered at press time from the ruptured patella tendon he suffered at New Year's Revolution … Despite that injury, Eugene still had a big WrestleMania moment this year, helping Hulk Hogan clear the ring of Hassan and Daivari and soaking in the adulation of the capacity crowd … The eight-time OVW heavyweight champion was formerly known as "Mr. Wrestling" due to his technical mastery … His scientific skills should never be underestimated, as no matter how silly he may act, Eugene can compete against the best of them—just ask Triple-H … Trained by OVW owner Danny Davis.

57 MASA CHONO (5'11", 245, 22, 103) Iconic star of New Japan Pro Wrestling has been battling neck and back injuries for years, but refuses to slow down … Tag team specialist has held the IWGP tag title six times, four with partner Hiroyoshi Tenzan … Leads the CTU stable that also includes Jushin Liger, Gedo, and Jado … His *kekka* kick has become the bane of virtually all New Japan wrestlers … Appeared in a number of *puroresu* dream matchups, opposite top stars like Mitsuharu Misawa and Kenta Kobashi … Trained in the same group as Keiji Muto and Shinya Hashimoto—the trio is sometimes called The Three Musketeers … Made sporadic appearances in WCW during the 1990s … Learned the STF from Lou Thesz, and even wrestled Thesz in his retirement match.

58 JEFF HARDY (6'2", 212, 11, NL) The enigmatic one came into TNA riding a wave of momentum, but he quickly saw that disappear … Signed with TNA in July 2004 and was granted an immediate title shot by Director of Authority Dusty Rhodes … Failed to beat Jeff Jarrett despite several opportunities … Beat Scott Hall at Final Resolution and fared well in an intense feud with Abyss … Hardy's infamously odd behavior landed him in hot water with TNA brass when he no-showed the Hard Justice PPV, apparently because of transportation problems … His swanton bomb is still a dazzling finisher … Career could have undergone another rebirth if brother Matt had shown up in TNA.

59 MICHAEL SHANE (6', 221, 5, 27) Shane's career has stagnated somewhat since he parted ways with Shane Douglas, who had picked him to be "The New Franchise" in TNA … Spent most of the past year teaming with Frankie Kazarian, a man with whom he shared the X division title at one point … Trained by Shawn Michaels and Rudy Boy Gonzales … Competed as Omega Griffon for All-Japan … Has appeared in WWE dark matches, ECW, FMW, Zero-One, and ROH … His "Sweet Shane Music" superkick and flying elbow are tributes to Michaels … Reunited with Tracy Brooks at Hard Justice when Tracy turned against Chris Sabin during an intergender tag match … Currently the top contender in NWA Cyberspace.

60 ERIC YOUNG (6', 218, 5, 181) "Showtime" has had a huge influence on the fortunes of Team Canada … Canadian competitor has been wowing fans throughout Ontario for years, particularly during his red-hot feud with Derek Wylde … Trained by Carl Leduc and Waldo Von Erich, as well as Scott D'Amore … Finishing move of choice is the Showstopper … Teamed with Bobby Rude to win the NWA tag title at Turning Point 2004 … Young is perhaps the most versatile member of Team Canada, a ladder match specialist with strong mat skills, impressive aerial ability, and the mind of a true ring general … Was the head trainer of the Wrestleplex school in Toronto.

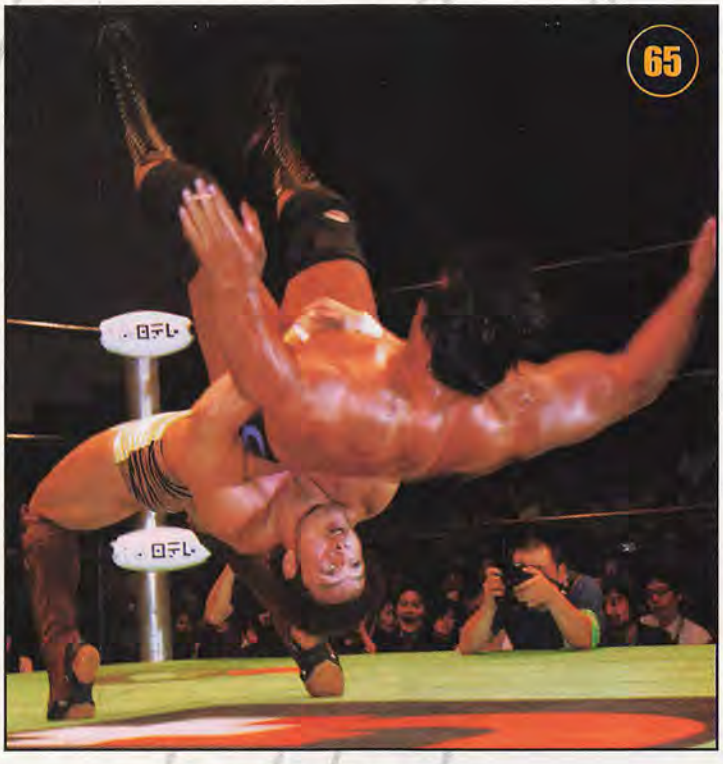
61 ELIX SKIPPER (5'10", 228, 5, 81) "Prime Time's" awe-inspiring cage walk and huracanrana at Turning Point was the most talked-about move of 2004 … Like Jimmy Snuka's famous steel cage splash, that one move might eclipse everything else he ever accomplishes … Like Snuka, Skipper lost that match … One of the most athletic men in the sport … Trained at the WCW Power Plant and debuted as a member of Lance Storm's Team Canada faction … Skipper is a former WCW cruiserweight champion and cruiserweight tag champion with Kid Romeo … Has struggled mightily since he and Christopher Daniels were forced to break apart as a team … Finisher is the play of the day … Could benefit by becoming a tad more aggressive.

62 AUSTIN ARIES (5'9", 202, 4, 225) The former ROH heavyweight champion jumped 163 spots in this year's "*PWI* 500" … Defeated Samoa Joe for the ROH belt at Final Battle 2004 … First earned national attention at the 2004 Super 8 Tournament, in which he made it to the finals with wins over Shawn (Khosrow) Daivari and John Walters … Defended the ROH belt against American Dragon, Homicide, Spanky, Joe, and others … Usurped Alex Shelley as the leader of Generation Next … A staunch vegetarian … Has a massive move set, including his 450 splash, brainbuster, and tornado plancha … A true star on the rise, Aries has the potential to be the next A.J. Styles.

63 ROBERT CONWAY (6', 240, 8, 45) The man formerly known as "Iron Man" seems happy to be away from his former La Resistance running buddies … Beat partner Sylvan Grenier in a one-on-one match on a July 2005 edition of *Sunday Night Heat* … A nine-time OVW Southern tag team champion with Nick "Eugene" Dinsmore and three-time OVW heavyweight champion … Was once a part of Bolin Services alongside John "Prototype" Cena … Was part of Eric Bischoff's anti-ECW Crusaders at One Night Stand … Typically targets opponents' necks with swinging neckbreakers and DDTs.

64 PERRO AGUAYO JR. (5'9", 200, 10, NL) Son of Perro Aguayo recently teamed with his semi-retired father … Their feud with Los Hermanos Dinamitas climaxed in a double-hair loss for the Dinamitas in February … A former National tag team and National light heavyweight champion … Wildly charismatic *rudo* has become a favorite of lots of Lucha fans … Jumped from AAA to the independents in 2003, and then arrived in CMLL shortly thereafter … Wears the same furry boots made famous by his legendary father … Hot temper has caused this young Luchador plenty of problems, as he's bloodied his foes with chairs, tables, and even a VCR of late … Pet finisher is the double-foot stomp known as *la lanza*.

65 KENTA (5'10", 195, 7, NL) One of the new stars to emerge from Mitsuharu Misawa's Pro Wrestling NOAH group, KENTA, a protege of Kenta Kobashi, has quickly become a junior heavyweight sensation … Tag team with Naomichi Marufuji was named the best in Japan for a number of years running … They were the first GHC junior tag team champions … Specializes in hard strikes, particularly kicks … Won this year's Differ Cup tag team tournament with Marufuji—they beat Minoru Fujita and Ikuto Hidaka in a spectacular match … Spent a good part of the year chasing Yoshinobu Kanemaru and the Global Honored Crown junior title … Just beginning to show how good he can be.



66 DOUG BASHAM (6'2", 245, 12, 63) The elder Basham has been wrestling since 1992 … Trained by his uncle Danny Davis … Won his first OVW heavyweight title in July 1998 and went on to hold that championship four times … A true student of the game, Basham has underrated technical skills and was considered the ring general of the Basham Brothers tag team … Previously managed by Victoria, Miss Jackie, Nikita, and Shaniqua … Maybe a ladies' man gimmick is in order … Joined JBL's Cabinet in the summer of 2004 and was instrumental in helping Layfield hold on to the WWE title for so long.

67 CHRIS HARRIS (6'2", 238, 4, 44) "The Wildcat" is one of TNA's homegrown stars, along with America's Most Wanted partner James Storm … Actually signed with WCW in 2000 and was assigned to Nashville, but never got the callup before the company folded … AMW are five-time NWA tag champions … Harris also held the title with Elix Skipper … Harris is considered by most insiders to be the workhorse of the team … Finishing move is the Catatonic … Harris came extremely close to winning the NWA title on a few occasions in early-2004, but he seems much more comfortable teaming with Storm … Was rumored to be at the heart of a bidding war between TNA and WWE, but Harris was content to stay with TNA.

68 CHARLIE HAAS (6'2", 265, 9, 40) The former Seton Hall collegiate standout is a superlative tag team wrestler … After years of teaming with his brother, Russ, Haas found championship gold alongside both Shelton Benjamin and the effeminate Rico … Enjoyed moderate success with Hardcore Holly as a partner before WWE released him … Ruined the biggest can't-miss scenario since the WCW/ECW invasion by publicly spurning both Miss Jackie and Dawn Marie, causing red-blooded males everywhere to wonder if Haas has been spending just a tad too much time with Rico … A fantastic technical wrestler seeking an opportunity to excel.

69 CHRIS SABIN (6', 215, 5, 32) Former TNA X champion is one of the standout graduates of Scott D'Amore's Can-Am Wrestling School in Windsor, Ontario … Had to forfeit the X title due to injury … Has the poise of a veteran despite being just 22 years old … Won the 2003 Super X Cup Tournament … A former Border City Wrestling TV champion … Known as "The Future," he was an integral part of Team NWA in 2004 and has excelled against international competition.

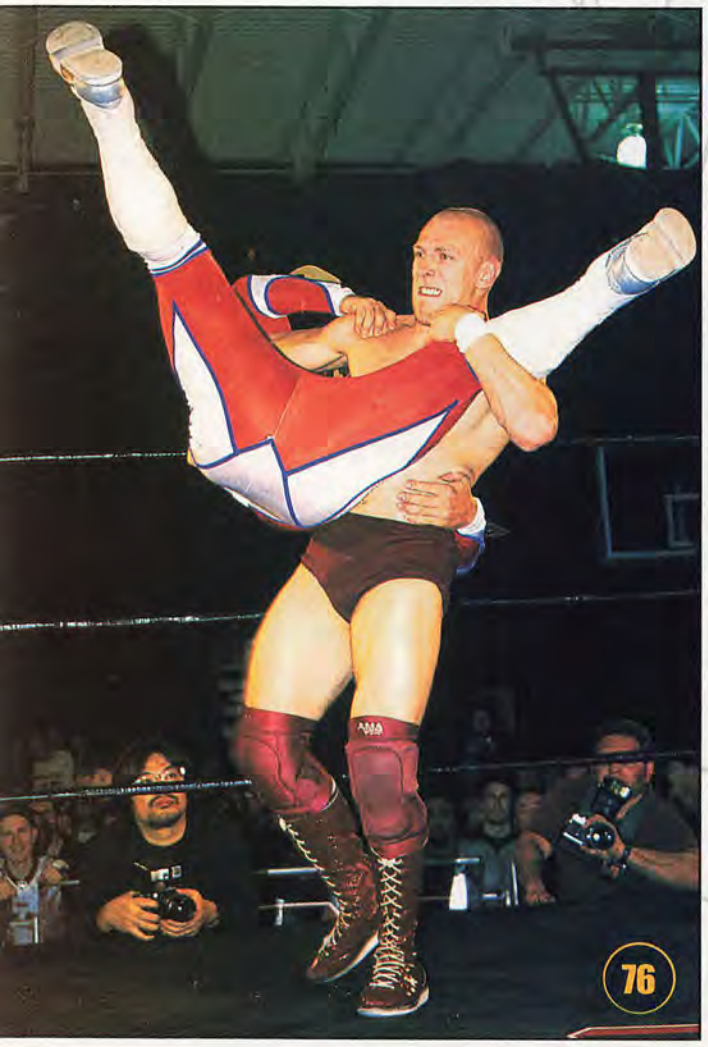
70 AVERNO (5'7", 183, 10, NL) One-half of the CMLL tag team champions along with Mephisto … Rose through the ranks steadily over the last two years and is finally a main event player … Began his career as Rencor Latino … Spent a few years in trios matches with Satanico, but got a new mask and look after forging out on his own … He and Mephisto are considered second only to the tag team of Ultimo Guerrero and Rey Bucanero in Mexico … Had an outstanding singles match against the high-flying Mistico in April … Favorite finisher starts like the pedigree, but he pulls his opponents straight up like a piledriver, and then sits down.

71 JAMES STORM (6', 225, 4, 64) "The Tennessee Cowboy" is the Jim Neidhart to Chris Harris' Bret Hart … America's Most Wanted have been TNA's most enduring—and successful—tag team … The stronger member of AMW, Storm has proven capable of standing toe-to-toe with big brawlers like Lance Hoyt and the Harris brothers … Showed great maturity as he stood aside and watched as his partner chased the NWA heavyweight title … AMW was named Tag Team of the Year by *PWI* readers in 2004 … Currently feuding with The Naturals.

72 DANNY BASHAM (6'3", 250, 6, 67) The taller of the two Basham brothers was the enforcer in JBL's Cabinet … Formerly known as The Damaja in Ohio Valley Wrestling … Three-time OVW heavyweight champ has had a love-hate relationship with "brother" Doug, with whom he feuded in OVW … His old brain Damaja variation of the Baldo bomb is a lethal finisher and greatly contributed to the Bashams' success … Two-time Smackdown tag team champ showed signs of frustration, both with JBL and with Doug in recent months … Prefers do to his talking in the ring, as he barely makes a peep during most of his WWE appearances.

73 KAZ HAYASHI (5'8", 187, 13, 118) Began his career in Michinoku Pro as Shiryu, before leaving Japan for WCW … Wrestled in Mexico before giving up his mask and wrestling under his given name … Was briefly in the WWE developmental program after WCW was bought out … Joined All-Japan Pro Wrestling under his mentor, Keiji Muto, and has become a junior heavyweight standout … Sometimes teams with Spanky as a pretty boy duo loved by female fans … Was a double tag team champion with Satoshi Kojima last year … Has wrestled in past Best of the Super Junior and Super J Cup Tournaments … Can execute a great slingshot DDT.

74 JOEY MERCURY (5'9", 213, 9, 156) Formerly known as Joey Matthews, Mercury has finally arrived in WWE after brief stints in both ECW and WCW and having been previously been cut from the WWE developmental roster … Extremely innovative competitor is known as a tag team specialist, but he has also held the 3PW heavyweight and several light heavyweight titles … Broke into wrestling as a teenager and has almost a full decade of experience under his belt, despite his young age … A true survivor.



75 THE HURRICANE (6'1", 210, 14, 58) Not since Superman first hooked up with Lois Lane has a mild-mannered superhero gotten himself such a hot piece of arm candy (we mean Stacy Keibler, not Rosey) … He and Rosey have taken advantage of a relatively weak Raw tag team division and established themselves as that brand's top tandem … Has held numerous titles throughout his career, including WCW and WWE cruiserweight and hardcore titles and the WWE European championship … A big fan of Japanese wrestling, Hurricane likes to incorporate *puroresu* moves such as the shining wizard and vertebreaker into his arsenal when possible.

76 AMERICAN DRAGON (5'8", 190, 4, 77) Bryan Danielson has gotten creepier in the past few months, sporting the latest in Unabomber face fashion … His increased intensity has manifested as brutality during his matches … Uses his cattle mutilation finisher and Dragon suplex with glee … Competes all over the world, from Japan to England … Technical prowess has made him a favorite in Japan as well as with ROH fans and the tape-trading set … A student of the British style even though he's from the state of Washington … Could easily replace Chris Benoit as the WWE's resident "ground and pound" wrestler.

77 MEPHISTO (5'7", 191, 17, NL) Former undercard star rose to prominence with new partner Averno, and the two have finally captured the CMLL tag title … A second generation star, he is the son of former wrestler Kahoz, better known as Astro Rey … Started his wrestling career under the name Kahoz Jr. before reinventing himself … Also a former CMLL welterweight champion … Thick, muscular Luchador has a creepy skull mask with devil horns on it … No longer affiliated with Satanico, but he was part of a past incarnation of Satanico's Infernales … Favorite move is the power bomb.

78 HARDCORE HOLLY (6'1", 249, 12, 54) Cranky veteran may have peaked in early-2004 with his feud with then-WWE champ Brock Lesnar … Deserves credit for being able to give Lesnar a competitive match, but was never seen as a legitimate threat to Lesnar's title … Better known for roughing up young stars than his in-ring exploits … Some might say he's just a veteran who is passionate about the business … Alabama slam is a brutal and impressive finisher … A former hardcore and tag team champion … Had a decent run teaming with Charlie Haas.

79 FRANKIE KAZARIAN (6'1", 220, 9, 50) The former TNA X division champ surprisingly requested his release from TNA to pursue a WWE developmental contract … Think that had anything to do with the fact he and his partner, Michael Shane, were feuding with—and losing to—NASCAR personality Jeff Hammond? … Has debuted in Ohio Valley Wrestling, but he could well show up in WWE before he's involved in any major OVW feud … Slightly bigger than many of his old X division opponents, Kazarian wouldn't look out of place against Shelton Benjamin or Randy Orton.

80 JOHNNY NITRO (6', 204, 2, 160) Talk about a makeover: Johnny Nitro went from being Eric Bischoff's apprentice/lackey on *Raw* to championship gold in his first televised Smackdown match … Along with Matt Cappotelli, won *Tough Enough III* (as John Hennigan) to earn a WWE contract … A stint in OVW served Nitro well, as he streamlined his physique and picked up some finesse and seasoning … Still prone to making rookie mistakes, however … The power merchant of M-N-M is poised to become the first *TE* alumnus to make a major impact on the WWE roster.

81 SPANKY (5'8", 184, 6, 83) This flake has been enjoying life on the independent scene … Spends much of his time wrestling for ROH, FIP, and everywhere in between … Trained by Shawn Michaels, but skipped the class on how to make the most of a WWE contract … Adored by the Japanese female fans because of his striking resemblance to Leonardo DiCaprio … Beat Ryoji Sai to win the Zero-One U.S. title in Hakodate, Japan … Has popularized the sliced bread #2, making it one of the most popular finishers around.

82 BRENT ALBRIGHT (6', 230, 3, 176) "The Shooter" has been heating things up in OVW recently and has won both the TV and heavyweight title this year … Trained in part by Mike Modest in APW … Was previously known as Vinnie Valentino, Smoke, and Slater Vain … Beat Matt Morgan for the OVW title in April … Albright is well-schooled in submission grappling and is able to apply his Fujiwara armbar finisher at a moment's notice … Has made several WWE dark match appearances … A former OCW heavyweight champion and three-time OCW tag champ … Now feuding with Lance Cade.

83 GENE SNITSKY (6'4", 310, 4, 301) Last year at this time, Snitsky was just another muscleman toiling away on the OVW undercard … His career was changed forever in his first *Raw* match, as he accidentally pushed Kane into a pregnant Lita, causing her to suffer a miscarriage … Adopted "It wasn't my fault!" as his catchphrase, apparently not considering T-shirt sales … Came up short in his feud with Kane before a torn abdominal muscle put him on the disabled list … Returned to WWE in June … He may catch a lot of flak, but given his size, it's impossible to not take him seriously.

84 TAKESHI RIKIOH (5'11", 252, 6, NL) Jumped from mid-card status to the main events with his historic title win over long-reigning Global Honored Crown champ Kenta Kobashi … Slow, methodical heavyweight whom fans have been reluctant to accept as a champion … Has defended the title successfully against Akitoshi Saito … Big man isn't afraid to use his splash from the top rope to flatten opponents … Formerly part of the Double Takeshis tag team alongside Takeshi Morishima … They held the GHC tag title for seven months in 2002 … Finishing move is called *muso*—a back suplex converted in mid-air to the Rock bottom.

85 NEGRO CASAS (5'7", 180, 26, 144) The most famous wrestling son of Pepe Casas … Brothers are fellow CMLL stars Felino and Heavy Metal … His father invented *la casita,* the pinning combination known in the United States as *la magistral* … CMLL mainstay found himself in trouble in 2003 after punching out announcer Leobardo Magadan … His feud with Ultimo Dragon helped popularize the Lucha style in Japan during the heyday of Gran Hamada's Universal promotion … Appeared with New Japan in the 1990s, and even popped up at the first Super J Cup Tournament … One of the head trainers at Arena Mexico.

86 ORLANDO JORDAN (6'4", 250, 5, 137) Jordan's U.S. title win over John Cena has to rank as one of the biggest upsets in Smackdown history … After several months competing as a generic—though gifted—fan favorite, came to JBL's aid in August 2004 and was named JBL's chief of staff … Jordan has taken beatings from some of Smackdown's biggest stars, but he has kept a tight grip on the U.S. title … Move to a brawling style has served him well and accommodates his impressive upper body strength … Former member of the U.S. Forest Service.

87 SPIKE DUDLEY (5'7", 155, 10, 51) Little Spike is the only member of the Dudley clan to make this year's "500" … Beat Rey Misterio Jr. for the cruiserweight title in July 2004, thanks to interference from Buh Buh Ray and D-Von … Spike got really nasty during that reign before dropping the belt to Funaki in December 2004 … Briefly reverted to his loopier ECW persona at One Night Stand … Was released from WWE just a few weeks later … He may have to brush off that teaching degree now … A well-spoken student of the game, Spike gave strong commentary on several recent WWE DVD releases.

88 SIMON DEAN (5'10", 215, 11, 152) We have no idea if the Simon System helps burn fat, but it certainly ticks off the people around you … Dean made a big splash on *Raw* with his infomercials, but has done little since stepping into the ring … Spent more time outside the ring limbering up than wrestling at the 2005 Royal Rumble, which was actually quite funny … Reverted back to his old Super Nova character at One Night Stand and several times since … A shot from the Dudleys had Joey Styles crack that it was "more painful than having to play Simon Dean on national TV" … An extremely innovative wrestler with experience in the Mexican, Japanese, and European styles.

89 HEIDENREICH (6'7", 300, 4, 150) One of the most misunderstood people in wrestling … He just wants to make friends … Got his start in UPW and received a WWE developmental deal, only to be released in 2002 … Actually won the NWA Intercontinental tag title with Nathan Jones in Tokyo in 2002 … After the successful Japanese tour, was re-signed by WWE … Briefly wrestled for Raw, then debuted on *Smackdown* under the tutelage of Paul Heyman … An accomplished striker with a penchant for poetry … Early feud with The Undertaker was an awful career move … Just who was "Little Johnny" anyway?

90 CHASE STEVENS (6', 220, 3, 119) One-half of The Naturals with Andy Douglas … Trained by Tracey Smothers … Stevens is the high-flyer of the team, using the shooting star press as his finisher … The Naturals won the NWA tag title on April 26, 2005, in the final wrestling appearance of their manager, Chris Candido, before his death from a blood clot … Their Natural disaster finisher is both flashy and effective … Injured James Storm's shoulder in 2004 … Despite the success of the team, both Stevens and Douglas are having trouble distinguishing themselves in the eyes of many fans.

PWI 500

91 MATT CAPPOTELLI (6', 218, 2, 170) The *Tough Enough III* winner has thrived in OVW, where he and partner Johnny Jeter are two of the company's most popular attractions … Still best remembered for being the victim of Hardcore Holly's bully tactics on *TE* … Suffered a concussion in an April 2004 bout against Holly … The Thrillseekers defended the OVW Southern tag title against M-N-M, The Blond Bombers, and The Heartthrobs … Went by the nickname "The Flava" during his *TE* stint … He's hoping he'll be the one to break the *Tough Enough* curse.

92 ROSEY (6'5", 360, 11, 98) Everyone laughed when Rosey left Three Minute Warning and started wearing oversized Underoos as The Hurricane's Super Hero In Training … Now Rosey's a tag team champion and Stacy Keibler is his own super heroine … Who's laughing now? … Has held several regional tag titles … A true tag team specialist with immense physical strength … The son of Wild Samoan Sika … Was previously known as Kimo of The Island Boyz … His large frame belies surprising foot speed and agility … One of the genuinely nice guys in wrestling.

93 MAVEN (6'2", 210, 4, 142) The very first *Tough Enough* winner had formed a credible team with Simon Dean before his release in July … Received a surprisingly high number of fan votes for the Taboo Tuesday Intercontinental title shot … Adopted a more aggressive persona following the 2004 Survivor Series … Quick loss to Shelton Benjamin at New Year's Revolution badly damaged his credibility … Maven has a superior cardiovascular training regimen and boasts one of the most accurate dropkicks in the business.

94 SYLVAN GRENIER (6'2", 240, 3, 60) Grenier was thrilled to be a part of the big trade that sent him from Raw to Smackdown, as he was at his wits' end with partner Robert Conway … A founding member of La Resistance with Rene Dupree, but was replaced by Conway due to injury … A graduate of Dory Funk Jr.'s Funkin' Conservatory … A former Raw tag champ … His upper body strength is vastly underrated … First appeared in WWE as Vince McMahon's handpicked sneaky French referee … How he fares with Smackdown over the next few months will dramatically affect his career prospects.

95 COLT CABANA (6'1", 235, 6, 155) "Classic" Colt is still trying to make Barry Manilow cool to wrestling fans … Part of The Second City Saints with C.M. Punk and Ace Steel … Has added a British influence to his wrestling style, which could explain his feud with Nigel McGuinness … Has lost 13 pounds in the past year … Was honored to have Bobby Heenan as his manager twice in the past year … Has spent a lot of time in Europe, wrestling in England, Germany, Scotland, and Ireland … Also competed in IWA Puerto Rico … Claims he once ate an entire watermelon after a match, which has to be good for something.

96 ANDY DOUGLAS (6'1", 220, 3, 126) One-half of The Naturals along with Chase Stevens … Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, native was previously managed by April Pennington … The Naturals have the distinction of winning the NWA tag title on April 26, 2005, in the final wrestling appearance of their manager, Chris Candido, before his tragic death … Douglas and Stevens silenced critics with successful title defenses against America's Most Wanted and Team Canada at Hard Justice and Slammiversary, respectively … Douglas is widely considered to be the superior mat wrestler of the team.

97 JOHNNY JETER (6', 218, 3, 70) The San Diego native has spent most of the past year teaming with Matt Cappotelli as The Thrillseekers in OVW … The Thrillseekers defended the OVW Southern tag title against M-N-M, The Blond Bombers, and The Heartthrobs … Style is reminiscent of Rick Morton of The Rock 'n' Roll Express … Trained by Nick "Eugene" Dinsmore in OVW … Pet moves include the Asai moonsault and his finisher, the top-rope corkscrew kick … Recently blinded in one eye, courtesy of Jillian Hall … Set his high school's varsity and junior varsity pole vaulting records.

98 B.G. JAMES (6'2", 261, 12, 147) James has been having the time of his life teaming with his good friends Konnan and Ron Killings as 3 Live Kru … Former member of DeGeneration X has been conflicted in his feelings about former partner The Outlaw, formerly known as Billy Gunn …The long-awaited New Age Outlaws reunion has yet to take place … Trained by Tommy Rich as well as his brothers Scott and Steve Armstrong … Still uses the pumphandle slam as a finisher … Former WWE Intercontinental and five-time tag champion … Veteran of the Gulf War … His success has made everyone forget about that supposed Armstrong curse.

99 KEIJI MUTO (6'1", 244, 22, 33) The former Great Muta of New Japan Pro Wrestling has spent the last few years as president of All-Japan Pro Wrestling … Muto's wrestling continues to defy his age … A two-time former All-Japan Triple Crown champ, as well as a three-time IWGP heavyweight champion … Years of abuse have caused his knees to weaken, and Muto occasionally hobbles about the ring … Has all but retired his famous moonsault press … American fans may remember his visits to WCW and ROH … Finisher is the shining wizard, a wicked knee strike to the temple or face.

100 JAMES GIBSON (5'8", 190, 11, 75) The former WWE cruiserweight champion (as Jamie Noble) was released from the company and became one of the most sought-after talents on the indy scene … Emerged as a top contender to the heavyweight and pure titles in Ring of Honor … Has made several tours of Japan since being released from WWE … It was his effort to follow in the footsteps of his role models, Dean Malenko and Chris Benoit … Competed in WCW as a member of The Jung Dragons as the masked Jamie-san … The original rampaging redneck.

91-110

101 DONOVAN MORGAN (6', 220, 7, 73) This West Coast veteran plies his trade in Japan's Pro Wrestling NOAH, PW Iron, and Impact Zone Wrestling ... Often teams with Mike Modest, with whom he's held several tag team titles both here and in Japan ... He and Modest also co-run Pro Wrestling Iron... A powerful, submission-style wrestler in the vein of a scaled-down Brock Lesnar ... Received the coveted "Future Superstar" award from the Cauliflower Alley Club ... A former ECWA Super 8 champion ... A power-based wrestler who incorporates *puroresu* into his multifaceted style ... Former ROH tag champ and a member of The Prophecy.

102 MR. NIEBLA (5'9", 209, 15, 29) Former CMLL heavyweight champ has been a popular *technico* practically his entire career ... Also a former CMLL trios and tag team champion ... Billed as "the man with the elastic body," his name literally translates to "Mr. Fog" ... Won the mask of former partner Shocker back in 1999, but oddly, it was Shocker's career that skyrocketed after the match ... Stocky masked man is a remarkable high-flyer and mat virtuoso ... His pet hold is *la nieblina,* a complicated hold that ties up an opponent's arms and legs in a tight little ball.

103 ALEX SHELLEY (5'10", 199, 3, 276) The former Generation Next star in ROH has put his "Baby Bear" days behind him ... Trained by Scott D'Amore and Joe E. Legend ... Shelley was replaced by Austin Aries as the leader of Generation Next, igniting a violent feud between Shelley and his former partners ... Also competes in TNA, Zero-One, Border City, and Japan ... Calls his style of wrestling "British lucharesu" to reflect his international influences ... Beat Andrew Ryker in the first match of the 2005 Super 8 tourney, but lost to eventual winner Petey Williams ... Finishers include the Shellshock, 2K1 Bomb, and Border City stretch.

104 TYSON TOMKO (6'6", 292, 3, 76) The big man with the wild tattoos and questionable facial hair put his singles career on hold in favor of being Christian's so-called "Problem Solver" ... Previously a member of The Disciples of Synn in OVW, teaming with Seven (a.k.a. Mordecai) ... In OVW, Tomko showed good potential as a classic powerhouse, but he has struggled in WWE ... Has a lethal tombstone finisher, but has yet to use it extensively in WWE ... Also worked as hired muscle for Trish Stratus ... With Christian being drafted by Smackdown, his future is uncertain.

105 BILLY KIDMAN (5'10", 195, 10, 92) The seven-time WCW/WWE cruiserweight champion had a major breakdown in 2004 when he accidentally injured Chavo Guerrero Jr. with a shooting star press ... This led to the breakup of his team with Paul London ... Had no compunction with using the SSP on London, breaking London's nose with the move ... Plagued by injuries, he was released by WWE in July 2005.

106 KONNAN (5'10", 260, 17, 164) K-Dogg is still getting rowdy, rowdy and bawdy, bawdy in TNA ... One of the most accomplished—and controversial—wrestlers ever to compete in Mexico ... Currently part of 3 Live Kru with B.G. James and Ron Killings ... The arrival of The Outlaw (Billy Gunn) on the scene has caused dissension in the ranks ... A former WCW U.S. champion ... Konnan has loads of experience and is equally adept at utilizing a power game as he is exchanging technical holds ... Finisher is the Tequila sunrise.

107 JUN AKIYAMA (6', 231, 13, 125) The original star of Mitsuharu Misawa's Pro Wrestling NOAH group has faded from the spotlight recently ... Captured the Global Honored Crown shortly after the company opened, but lost it to Yoshinari Ogawa in 2002 ... Partnered with Kenta Kobashi as the beloved duo The Burning ... Current partner is Takeshi Morishima ... Introduced the hardcore title into straight-laced NOAH, but the championship is regarded as a joke ... Famed for his front chancery guillotine choke ... Ditched his famous all-blue ring outfit a few years back and now tends to wear white and silver to the ring ... Favorite finisher is the exploder suplex and its many variations.

108 SHO FUNAKI (5'7", 180, 15, 138) Smackdown's *"numbah*-one announcer" is living proof that hard work and perseverance can pay off ... After years of struggling in *Heat* and *Velocity* matches, Funaki won a cruiserweight battle royal to earn the number-one contender spot ... At Armageddon 2004, Funaki stunned Spike Dudley to win the title ... The highlight of his reign—if not his career—came on February 10, 2005, when he beat Chavo Guerrero Jr. in Japan to retain the title ... Competed in the prestigious Super J Cup Tournament in 1995 ... Has held the WWE hardcore, TWA heavyweight, and UWA middleweight titles.

109 ELIJAH BURKE (6'1", 230, 1, NL) This charismatic rookie has impressed a lot of fans—and talent scouts—in OVW ... A former sheriff's deputy with the Jacksonville Police Department ... Decided to leave that career behind to follow his dream of becoming a pro wrestler ... Idolized Dusty Rhodes as a boy, and was heavily influenced by Rhodes' interview style ... Beat Carlito Caribbean Cool at OVW's Fall Brawl 2004 ... Beat Muhammad Hassan at the 2004 Crusade Rumble ... Held the OVW heavyweight championship for four months in early-2005 ... Quick on his feet with good fundamentals and natural athleticism, Burke is considered a top prospect for WWE.

110 MICHAEL MODEST (5'10", 220, 15, 79) This versatile mat wrestler has competed all over the world ... A regular in Japan for Pro Wrestling NOAH ... Continues to operate Pro Wrestling Iron with partner Donovan Morgan ... He and Morgan are as formidable in the ring as a team as they are in the business world ... Held the PWI tag title ... Won the New Breed Wrestling Association's Mike Lockwood Memorial Tournament on March 18 ... Defeated James Gibson in the finals ... A suplex master, Modest always seems to find exciting new ways to drop guys from over his head ... Calls his finisher the reality check.

PWI 500

111 MR. AGUILA (5'8", 200, 11, 86) Former WWF star has been back with AAA for some time … Also competed as Essa Rios and Papi Chulo in years past … A former WWE light heavyweight and UWA light heavyweight champion … Newly formed tag team with Juventud Guerrera was broken up when Juvi left for WWE … Lost his mask to Ultimo Guerrero back in 1998 … Known for his corkscrew variation of moves like the tope con hilo and the tope suicida … Joined Hector Garza, Abismo Negro, and Juventud Guerrera as Team Mexico to challenge for the X Cup in TNA last year.

112 GENICHIRO TENRYU (6'1", 275, 29, 90) The ageless *puroresu* star is an active freelance agent in Japan, wrestling for a variety of promotions … Recently appeared in the fledgling Dragon Gate company, in which he is teaming with Tokyo Magnum … One of the few men alive to have held both the All-Japan Triple Crown and the IWGP heavyweight title … Always clad in black and yellow … One of the few Japanese wrestlers to ever appear at both a Royal Rumble (1993) and a WrestleMania (VII) … Known for his hard chops and kicks … Finisher is a jackhammer-like move that fans have dubbed the "54-year-old."

113 STEVE CORINO (6'1", 229, 10, 69) The "King Of Old School" has another jewel in his crown: the AWA heavyweight title … He can add that to an already-impressive list of 29 singles titles and seven tag team titles … Probably the only man who will ever be able to boast holding the ECW, NWA, and AWA titles … Quit Ring of Honor this year, but still maintains a busy wrestling schedule, frequently competing in Japan and Europe … Competes mainly in Zero-One Max in Japan … Is such a throwback with his wrestling style that you'd swear his daddy was Dusty Rhodes or Dick Murdoch.

114 TANK TOLAND (5'9", 225, 5, 141) Tank is a former OVW heavyweight champion and usually teams with "cousin" Chad as The Blond Bombers … Replaced Nova as part of Adrenaline, teaming with Chris Cage before his cousin showed up in OVW … Together, Cage and Tank held the OVW Southern tag title on two occasions, but they're far from being on speaking terms these days … His finisher is the terret, a spinning Polish hammer … Tore his biceps and blamed the injury on a phantom backstage attack by Cage … One of the best promo men in OVW.

115 KID KASH (5'10", 188, 15, 65) "The Notorious K.I.D." seems to be following in the footsteps of Brian Pillman, both with his unpredictable behavior and incredible in-ring moves … Walked out of TNA for an opportunity to compete on the One Night Stand event … Made an awesome suicide dive during a run-in in the main event and was called "Mr. Total Nonstop Attitude" by Joey Styles … Broke into the business as David Jericho, teaming with Rick Morton … A former TNA X division, NWA tag, and ECW TV champion … Kash is extensively skilled in martial arts and shootfighting and is willing to stand up to any man.

116 CHRIS MASTERS (6'5", 270, 3, 185) "The Masterpiece" keeps upping the reward, but no one seems to be able to break his Masterlock full-nelson … Masters is a former Mr. California and runner-up in the Mr. Olympia competition … Formed The Troubleshooters with Brent Albright in OVW … At just 22 years old, Masters has lots of potential … Showed just how dangerous he can be by breaking Steven Richards' orbital bone with a devastating Polish hammer strike to the face … While his prematch posedowns anger many wrestlers (and fans), no one has been able to hand him his comeuppance.

117 RENE DUPREE (6'3", 250, 7, 108) Chris Masters may call himself "The Masterpiece," but this Montreal native could give him a run for that title … The son of Emil Dupree … Has been training for a career in the ring and in weightlifting since the age of 11 … The youngest person ever to sign a WWE developmental contract (at 18) … A founding member of La Resistance … Drafted to Smackdown in 2004 and then back to *Raw* in 2005 … Riles the fans with his poodle, Fifi, and his odd celebratory dance … Many insiders feel Dupree has superstar potential, like fellow second- (or third-) generation stars The Rock and Randy Orton … Favors his *bonsoir* driver and fisherman's suplex.

118 MARK JINDRAK (6'5", 253, 6, 112) "The Reflection Of Perfection" was yet another victim of the WWE layoffs of July 2005 … Seemed to have some good momentum after splitting with Luther Reigns and introducing Reigns to his hands of stone punch … Worked as an enforcer for Kurt Angle … A former WCW tag team champion … His inability to get a real push is truly puzzling, as Jindrak has the true superstar look and solid in-ring skills … His lack of personality could have been his downfall … Could become a major player on the indy scene.

119 SHARK BOY (5'10", 180, 8, 151) Don't mention Lava Girl to this Shark Boy … Filed suit against the makers of the film *Shark Boy And Lava Girl* for copyright infringement … Still one of the most popular wrestlers in TNA and all over the indy circuit … Hails from "20,000 leagues under the sea," but his home waters are in Ohio … Formed a funny team with D-Ray 3000 … His Dead Sea drop somersault blockbuster is an enormously effective finisher, but requires a lot of setup time, making it difficult to land on veteran opponents … Has wrestled several WWE dark matches.

120 AARON STEVENS (6'4", 237, 7, 168) "The Idol" broke away from Nova's Jersey Crew and struck out as a singles competitor over the past year … Now accompanied to the ring by Beth Phoenix and has adopted a smug, elitist attitude … Former Chaotic Wrestling heavyweight and tag team champion … Has made several WWE appearances, both on *Heat* and in dark matches, since signing a developmental contract … Feuded with former partner Danny Inferno in some wild bouts in OVW … Continues to disturb fans with his gluteus flexes from the ring apron.

121 SONJAY DUTT (5'8", 185, 4, 128) "The Playa From The Himalayas" has been excelling in NWA Cyberspace and CZW ... Best known for his appearances in TNA, where he has been a player in the X division and a member of Team NWA ... Trained by Larry Sharpe ... Often sets up his Hindusault (a flying corkscrew 450 splash) with his Bombay buster suplex into a knee buster ... Won the 2004 CZW Best of the Best Tournament ... A former IWA Mid-South light heavyweight champ ... Had the unfortunate honor of being the first TNA victim of Samoa Joe at Slammiversary.

122 TOKYO MAGNUM (5'11", 201, 8, 217) Rose to fame in Toryumon, then led the majority of the roster in a mass exodus and started up Dragon Gate about a year ago ... The group instantly became an independent powerhouse on the *puroresu* scene ... Recently began a strange partnership with Genichiro Tenryu ... Charismatic grappler delights female fans with his dancing ... Started his career on the undercard of IWRG and WCW events ... Won the El Numero Uno Tournament in 2002 ... Skillful in the air, he calls his graceful shooting star press the AV press ... Signature move is called the Viagra driver.

123 THE OUTLAW (6'4", 254, 12, 62) The man formerly known as Billy Gunn showed up in TNA with a major league chip on his shoulder ... Gunn is a true tag team specialist, having won 10 WWE tag titles with three different partners (Bart Gunn, Road Dogg, and Chuck Palumbo) ... Also a former Intercontinental champion ... Still uses his famouser as his main finisher ... Debuted in TNA at Against All Odds ... Defeated Kevin Nash in a first-blood match at Destination X.

124 NIGEL McGUINNESS (6'1", 220, 5, 219) British mat wrestler has been making his mark in ROH ... A former Heartland Wrestling Association heavyweight and tag team champion ... Teams with Chad Collyer in ROH ... Principal finisher is the guvnor's crumpet, a hammerlock pedigree ... Also known for his top turnbuckle headstand and Rick Steamboat-style deep armdrags ... Intensely feuding with Colt Cabana ... Frequently brings his trusty iron—yes, an iron—to the ring to use as a weapon ... Has the size and showmanship to be a breakout star ... Imagine a younger, more athletic William Regal.

125 KHOSROW DAIVARI (5'10", 203, 5, 238) The man formerly known as *Shawn* Daivari is the perfect example of a wrestler who used the ECWA Super 8 Tournament as a steppingstone to WWE ... A last-minute replacement for the injured Tyson Dux in the 2004 tourney, Daivari lost a close match to Austin Aries in the quarterfinals ... Signed with WWE shortly thereafter and was paired with Muhammad Hassan ... Hassan and Daivari (along with bodyguard Osama) incited OVW fans to near-riot levels ... Irritates fans by translating everything Hassan says into Farsi.

126 JUVENTUD GUERRERA (5'5", 165, 13, 52) We'd been hearing rumors of Juvi's "impending arrival" in WWE for so long that we had almost given up on him ... Finally showed up on *Smackdown* as part of The Mexicools in June 2005 ... Gotta dig his "Juan Deere" lawn tractor ... The WCW alumnus has stayed busy over the past year, competing throughout Mexico and in a handful of U.S. independent promotions ... Was part of Team Mexico in TNA ... Helped popularize cruiserweight wrestling in the late-1990s in WCW ... Almost as well known for his controversial behavior at times as he is for his high-flying attacks.

127 CHAD TOLAND (5'9", 205, 4, 260) Turns out this Malibu Beach native is a cousin of Tank Toland ... The Tolands—a.k.a. The Blond Bombers—have been infuriating the OVW faithful, but they have also been extremely entertaining ... Chad trained at the Chaotic Training Center and the Inoki Dojo and made his debut as "Lifesaver" Billy Kryptonite ... A natural showman and performer ... Briefly held the OVW heavyweight title after scoring an upset over Chris Cage in December 2004 ... Snagged a WWE developmental contract in 2004 and has made several WWE appearances in dark matches and on *Sunday Night Heat*.

128 NUNZIO (5'9", 209, 14, 111) Reunited with fellow Full-Blooded Italians J.T. Smith, Tracey Smothers, Tony Mamaluke, and Big Guido at One Night Stand ... "The Sicilian Shooter" is extremely skilled in mat wrestling and submission-style grappling ... Trained by Billy Robinson, Lou Thesz, and Dan Hodge ... Got his first big break in ECW in 1995 as Little Guido ... Has gone from comedy matches to the thick of cruiserweight contention ... Joined WWE in December 2002 as Jamie Noble's cousin ... Other than Rey Misterio Jr., Nunzio is probably the most respected cruiserweight in WWE.

129 VISCERA (6'10", 496, 14, NL) Somebody call Mark Henry and let him know Big Vis has stolen his "Sexual Chocolate" gimmick ... The gargantuan brawler got a fresh start when Trish Stratus recruited him as a pawn in her war with Kane and Lita ... Now Viscera is Raw's most eligible bachelor, as Lilian Garcia can attest ... A former King of the Ring and WWF tag champion as Mabel ... Also held the WWE hardcore title and heavyweight titles in Memphis and in Puerto Rico ... While his big splash is feared, his crossfaces from a rear mount position are even more feared.

130 ATLANTIS (5'8", 199, 22, 97) Master of the spinning torture rack called *la atlantida* ... Long-time *technico* is a favorite of children in Mexico ... Acapulco native remains one of CMLL's most consistent performers ... Famous white and blue mask is a big seller at arenas in Mexico ... Had arguably his greatest match in 2000, when he defeated Villano III for his mask ... Briefly held the Michinoku Pro tohoku junior title last year ... Mainly sticks to trios matches these days, and the occasional tag team bout with semi-regular partner Blue Panther ... One of the innovators of the high-flying style in Mexico.

PWI 500

131 KOJI KANEMOTO (5'10", 200, 15, 139) The former Tiger Mask III has had his hands full in the past year dealing with his successor, Tiger Mask IV … Consistent performances at the annual Best of the Super Junior over the last eight years have made him synonymous with the tournament … He won it in both 1998 and 2002 … Came back from a few nagging injuries, but is none the worse for wear … Likes to use flying moves like the moonsault press and the twisting senton from the middle rope … Sometimes reprises his Tiger Mask character for special events, and regularly uses the Tiger suplex as his finisher.

132 ANTONIO THOMAS (6'1", 235, 4, 385) "The Promise" is living it up as one-half of The Heartthrobs on *Raw* … Trained by Steve Bradley … Cut his teeth in New England, where he first started teaming with Romeo Roselli … The two reunited in OVW in November 2004 … Initially heels, their outrageous antics soon made them cult favorites … Feuded with M-N-M and The Thrillseekers in OVW … The Heartthrobs made their *Raw* debut in a non-title bout against William Regal and Tajiri and have received several title shots, but have yet to take the gold … Likes to use a double-STO along with Roselli to beat opponents.

133 KENZO SUZUKI (6'3", 250, 5, 110) The wannabe American from Japan was released from WWE as the "500" was being compiled … Was put out of action in April 2005 with a collapsed lung … Suzuki had been competing in OVW at the time of his release … Was a major rugby star in Great Britain before joining New Japan … Won the 2000 Young Lions Cup Tournament … Considered a giant by Japanese standards … Might consider a return to TNA, in which he wrestled Perry Saturn to a draw in July 2003 … Held the Smackdown tag title with Rene Dupree.

134 STEVEN RICHARDS (6'2", 227, 13, 106) The man formerly known as "Dancin'" Stevie should really think about signing a manager … He could use someone to stop him from signing matches against big, hard-hitting opponents … Was badly beaten by Tyson Tomko, then suffered facial injuries from a devastating Polish hammer from Chris Masters … It may be hard to believe today, but Richards came close to winning the ECW World title on several occasions … Had he not injured his back, his whole career could have been different … Stevie-kick is a solid finisher … Got the band back together with a BWO reunion at One Night Stand and on subsequent *Smackdowns*.

135 VAL VENIS (6'2", 250, 10, 99) You would think a man so flamboyant wouldn't stand for such a low-profile spot in WWE … Most memorable moment of the past year was probably Val failing to win the Masterlock Challenge … A former Intercontinental champ who cut his teeth in Mexico … As Chief Morley, he was Eric Bischoff's chief of staff on *Raw* … Maybe he should see if JBL could use a new chief of staff … Finisher is the money shot, a five-star frog splash off the top rope … He really should introduce himself to some of the new Raw divas and bring back his old "Hello, ladies" persona.

136 ROMEO ROSELLI (6'1", 220, 3, NL) The man with the never-ending abs first gained fame in OVW … First teamed with Antonio Thomas in the Eastern Wrestling Alliance, where they won the tag title … The Heartthrobs reunited in OVW as heels, but their over-the-top, gender-bending antics turned them into fan favorites … Previously managed by Mo Green and feuded extensively with M-N-M … Made a surprise appearance on *Raw*, challenging Tajiri and William Regal for the tag belts in their first televised match … Roselli favors the blockbuster as his finisher of choice … Is also an ECWA alumnus.

137 SCOTTY TOO HOTTY (5'9", 209, 17, NL) The purveyor of the worm is back after a testicular cancer scare … Scotty has also missed stretches of time due to neck and ankle injuries that have forced him to adopt a more conservative style … A former tag champion (with Brian "Grandmaster Sexay" Christopher and Rikishi) and light heavyweight champion in WWE … His 2000 feud with Dean Malenko showed that he has impressive technical skills when he isn't concentrating solely on goofing off … A competent overall wrestler with almost two decades of pro experience … Has the potential to be a surprise cruiserweight champion, like Funaki and Spike Dudley.

138 DOUG WILLIAMS (6'1", 233, 9, 171) British technician is a former ROH pure champion … A former British judo champion … Has helped popularize the European style of wrestling across the U.S. indy scene, primarily through his work in ROH … Calls his finisher the chaos theory … Won the Pro Wrestling NOAH GHC tag team title with Scorpio … Known as "The Anarchist" … Beat American Dragon to become the first International Catch Wrestling Alliance heavyweight champion … Uses the impeccable balance from his judo days to his advantage, giving him an edge on the mat.

139 SHANNON MOORE (5'8", 175, 10, 129) The former would-be boy bander now bears a striking resemblance to a young (and decidedly more toned) Johnny Rotten of The Sex Pistols … Cut his teeth in NWA Worldwide as part of The Bad Street Boys with Shane (Hurricane) Helms, Joey (Mercury) Matthews, and Christian York … From there it was on to WCW as part of Three Count … Beat Jamie Noble and Chad Collyer to begin his two HWA cruiserweight title runs in 2002 … Crowning moment in WWE to date was his run as Matt Hardy's top "Mattitude Follower" … An extremely talented cruiserweight who never seems to fare well against the heavyweights.

140 JIMMY RAVE (5'11", 186, 5, 199) This former Wildside star is now making his home in ROH … The main henchman in Prince Nana's Embassy stable … Since returning to ROH, he's feuded with C.M. Punk and now A.J. Styles—a former Wildside competitor … Adopted the Styles clash as his pet finisher—much to A.J. Styles' dismay … Has even used the Styles clash on A.J. … Other holds featured in his arsenal are the Fujiwara armbar and the shining wizard … List of titles held includes Wildside junior heavyweight, CZW ironman, and NWA junior heavyweight … Should be aiming for a ROH pure title reign in the coming year.

131-150

141 AKIO (5'9", 185, 6, 140) The former Jimmy Yang had been virtually invisible for the Smackdown brand in recent months, then was released … Signed a three-year deal with WWE in 2003 and debuted as one of Tajiri's hired thugs, but that storyline evaporated … Was a member of The Jung Dragons in WCW and The Flying Elvises in TNA … Teamed with Satoshi Kojima to beat Keiji Muto and George Hines in April 2003 … Trained at the WCW Power Plant … Finisher is the Yang time … Soft-spoken demeanor got him lost in the shuffle … Uses a fast-paced martial arts style peppered with aerial attacks.

142 ORIENTAL (5'9", 202, 13, NL) One of the famous wrestling Morenos … His sisters are also popular Luchadores … Recently toured Japan with Mitsuharu Misawa's Pro Wrestling NOAH after departing from Super Delfin's Osaka Pro … A regular in Mexico with AAA, as well as a frequent independent star for groups like IWRG … Made a few appearances in the United States in the past year for the Pennsylvania-based CHIKARA … His rivalry with Abismo Negro spans many years … A master of the flying headscissors, he can execute the move from all sorts of odd angles in and out of the ring … A former UWA welterweight champion … Likes to use the Tiger suplex.

143 D-LO BROWN (6'3", 281, 11, 61) Europe and Japan are now definitely "down with the Brown" … Maybe they still wish he was the WWE "Euro-Continental champion" … After a stint in TNA, he returned to wrestling mainly independents … Won the Border City Wrestling heavyweight title in July 2004 and held the belt until A-1 unseated him five months later … Made up for it by winning the Irish Whip Wrestling title from Seamus O'Shaunessy on May 29 … Uses the frog splash as his finisher … Hard to believe it's been 10 years since he was just the bodyguard of The Gangstas.

144 PSICOSIS (5'10", 198, 14, 71) The two-time former WCW cruiserweight champion has finally made it to the promised land of WWE as part of the Mexicools … Trained by Rey Misterio Sr. … First came to prominence in the U.S. with his ECW series against Rey Misterio Jr. … That series landed him a spot in WCW, where he became one of that company's featured cruiserweights … Competed in World Wrestling All-Stars, XPW, and in Mexico after WCW folded … Upset by John Walters in the first round of the 2004 Super 8 tournament … Favors a legdrop from the top rope as his main finisher, but any time he can lift his body into the air, Psicosis is extremely dangerous … Previously known as Nicho El Millionario due to a dispute over the rights to the Psicosis name.

145 TREVOR RHODES (6'4", 240, 8, NL) This Harley Race trainee spent six months doing his post-grad work at the NOAH Dojo in Japan … He has completed seven tours with NOAH and has wrestled some of the top stars of the promotion, including Kenta Kobashi, Mitsuharu Misawa, and Jun Akiyama … Defeated Rick Steiner to win the World League Wrestling title … Featured in a *New York Times* article about the Harley Race Academy and WLW … Recently signed his WWE developmental contract … Is now paired with Garrison Cade as TNT in WWE dark matches … Hopefully, this cowboy-centric team will make it to the main roster.

146 ROCKY ROMERO (5'7", 175, 6, 189) This tag team specialist is one-half of The Havana Pit Bulls, alongside Ricky Reyes … Impressed New Japan officials enough to get him tapped to be Black Tiger IV … Has wrestled mainly in California and Japan, but is also a frequent ROH competitor … Held the ROH tag title with Reyes, as well as the UPW, MPW, IWC, and EWF tag titles … His strong *puroresu* and Lucha Libre hybrid style can be attributed to his trainers, Antonio Inoki and Negro Casas … Competed in the 2004 Super 8 Tournament.

147 ADAM PEARCE (6'2", 233, 9, NL) "Scrap Iron" returns to the list after a four-year absence … His last ranking was 200 in 2001 … This Chicago native packed his bags for sunny California, where he frequently wrestles for Pro Wrestling Guerilla, UPW, Pro Wrestling WAR, and Southern California Championship Wrestling … Held several titles, including the UPW heavyweight, IWA Mid-South light heavyweight, Steel Domain Wrestling Northern States TV, and Mid American Wrestling heavyweight … Competed in Mexico's Promociones XLUM, where he feuded with Venum Black, Extreme Tiger, Nicho el Millionario (Psicosis), and Rey Misterio Sr. … Finishers include the rack bomb 2, a flying fist-drop, and a jumping piledriver.

148 SEVEN (6'5", 285, 5, 88) The man previously known as Mordecai was recently released by WWE … Collected wins over Hardcore Holly and Scotty Too Hotty and seemed on his way to a feud with The Undertaker when WWE Creative scratched the gimmick and sent him back to OVW … Actually an extremely entertaining wrestler who always involves the crowd … Teamed with Tyson Tomko as The Disciples of Synn … Finisher was the crucifix, a version of the Razor's edge … The big redhead was in the midst of a feud with Blaster Lashley when he was released.

149 C.W. ANDERSON (6'1", 237, 10, 74) This old school throwback has all of the attributes of a good Anderson: tenacity, toughness, and the ability to win any bar fight … Only thing missing is actual Ole, Gene, Lars, or Arn Anderson blood in his veins … Competed this year at the Hardcore Homecoming show and attended the ECW One Night Stand PPV … When not gallivanting around the world, he wrestles for independents throughout the Southeast … Still uses the classic Anderson finisher: a spinebuster … Grossly underrated for his mat-based maneuvers and submission knowledge.

150 JAMAL (6'5", 356, 6, 179) Has spent much of his time in AJPW wrestling against former WWE competitors Chuck Palumbo and Brute Bernard (a.k.a. A-Train) … He and Taiyo Kea have formed one of the more formidable foreigner teams in All-Japan … Also competes in Italy and WXW in the U.S. … One of the smaller Samoans, but is arguably the most agile of the bunch … Formerly a member of Three Minute Warning in WWE and a heavyweight contender for the NWA title in TNA.

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151 DANNY INFERNO (6'4", 230, 13, 242) OVW competitor has been around the block … Won dozens of state and regional championships as an amateur wrestler in high school and placed second in the New Jersey state finals … Was inducted into the ECWA Hall of Fame in 1996 … Signed a WWE developmental deal in February 2005 … Managed by Trudi DeNucci … Feuding with Aaron "Idol" Stevens and Stevens' manager, Beth Phoenix … Beat Gangrel in a singles match in June 2005 … Once claimed he was named "Mr. Jersey Shore 2000," though no one can confirm it … Was part of Nova's Jersey Crew in 2004.

152 SUPER DELFIN (5'9", 205, 16, 157) President and most recognizable star of Japanese independent Osaka Pro, the company he founded after leaving Michinoku Pro … Cut his teeth in the Mexican independents, then wrestled for Gran Hamada's Universal in the early-1990s … Masked man was once thought of as a comedy act, but got serious after suffering a harrowing back injury at the hands of Kaientai DX in 1997 … Not to be confused with Super Dolphin, another Osaka Pro wrestler … Invented the Osaka cutter variation of the stunner … Was once known as Monkey Magic Wakita … Favorite finishing combo is the swinging DDT followed by his Delfin clutch.

153 GARRISON CADE (6'5", 262, 6, 85) One of the first graduates of the Shawn Michaels Wrestling Academy, Cade is currently competing in OVW (as Lance Cade) after suffering a knee injury … Also testing a new tag team with Trevor Rhodes, called TNT, in dark matches before televised WWE shows … Uses a legdrop from the top rope as his finisher, but his primary set-ups, the flying elbow and the superkick, are lifted right out of HBK's playbook … A former HWA heavyweight champion and two-time tag champion … Feuding with Brent Albright in OVW … Started wrestling at age 19, so he's still young.

154 ABISMO NEGRO (5'9", 191, 15, 91) Masked *rudo* of AAA always has his blowtorch handy to scorch opponents and incite trouble … Years-long rivalry with Oriental spans numerous promotions in both Mexico and Japan … Recently returned from a tour with Pro Wrestling NOAH, where he and Oriental locked horns once again … Got a bit of American exposure last year as part of Team Mexico in TNA … Once known as Winners, he lost his mask to Super Calo in 1995 … Part of the LLL contingent that makes life miserable for the *technicos* of AAA … Nickname is *"el rey del martinete,"* which means "king of the piledriver."

155 BLASTER LASHLEY (6'3", 250, 6, NL) Bobby "Blaster" Lashley is getting some serious attention down in Ohio Valley Wrestling, where he is currently managed by Kenny Bolin … Attended Missouri Valley College and won three national wrestling championships from 1996 to 1998 … Was the NAIA national wrestling champion in 1997 and 1998 and also wrestled in the U.S. Army … Like fellow amateur standout Brock Lesnar, his credentials are good, but his freakish power is what's turning heads … Has been wrestling handicap challenge matches and almost killed Alexis Laree in the TV title tournament … Expected to show up in WWE in the very near future.

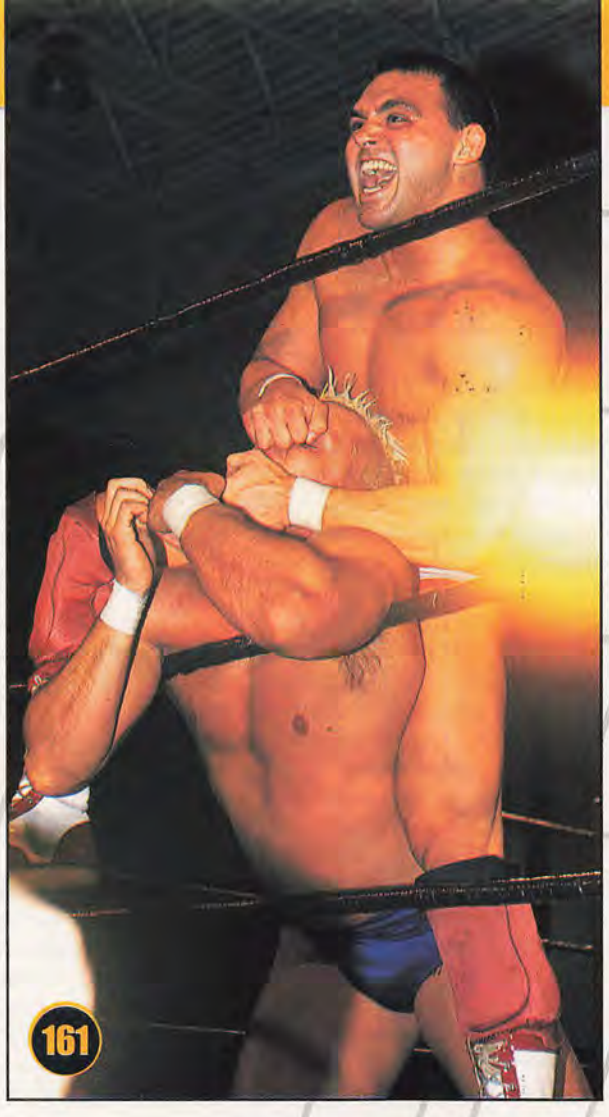
156 LANCE HOYT (6'9", 290, 2, 273) The big man from Dallas came into TNA as Kid Kash's cousin and resident enforcer … A two-time NWA tag team champion with Kash … Has lost some of his steam since Kash's abrupt departure from TNA … A dispute with Bobby Rude has made Hoyt an enemy of all of Team Canada, so he has no shortage of potential opponents … Rugged brawler learned a lot from being around Kash, including shootfighting and promo skills … Finisher is the blackout, a sitdown power bomb.

157 RHINO (5'10", 250, 11, 57) It's been a topsy-turvy year for the man-beast … Was released from WWE after WrestleMania, allegedly due to an incident at the hotel where he was staying … Appeared at One Night Stand where he interrupted Rob Van Dam's promo and faced Sabu in an impromptu bout … One month later, the former ECW World champion debuted in NWA-TNA at No Surrender where he gored Raven … The big question is whether Rhino will pursue the NWA title or if he's just another one of Jeff Jarrett's pawns … A former ECW TV, WWE tag, and WWE hardcore champion.

158 HOMICIDE (5'10", 220, 12, 192) Rugged brawler mixes traditional streetfight tactics with complex Japanese maneuvers … Won a tournament to become the first Pro Wrestling Unplugged heavyweight champion, beating Sonny Siaki, Mana, and Trent Acid in June 2005 … Known for his intensity and determination … Homicide is one of ROH's top stars and has collected wins over James Gibson, American Dragon, Samoa Joe, Christopher Daniels, and many others … Formed The Rottweilers with Ricky Reyes, Rocky Romero, and Low-Ki … Teamed with B-Boy to win the JAPW tag belts from The Christopher Street Connection … Beat C.M. Punk in the finals to crown a new Full Impact Pro champion.

159 TAKA MICHINOKU (5'7", 172, 14, 177) Inventor of the often imitated Michinoku driver, he coincidentally rose to fame in the rings of Michinoku Pro … Now a top star with both All-Japan Pro Wrestling as well as the Kaientai Dojo company that he founded … Former WWE light heavyweight champion, he held the now-defunct title for 10 months in 1997-1998 before losing to Christian … Turned a lot of heads with a standout performance opposite Black Tiger at the 1994 Super J Cup … Feuding with Kaz Hayashi—the two were partners in the original Kaientai along with Dick Togo, Shoichi Funaki, and Men's Teioh … Has experience in Mexico and Puerto Rico as well … Finishes off opponents with his crossface submission.

160 DOS CARAS JR. (6'4", 233, 5, NL) Son of famed Luchador Dos Caras, he is also the nephew of Mil Mascaras and Sicodelico … Became an overnight sensation a few years back with an upset mixed martial arts win in Japan … Incredible shootfighter with an Olympic-level amateur background … Also noted for his amazing strength, he can gorilla-press opponents of any size … Has a great German suplex … Now with CMLL, he previously wrestled for AAA … Towers over most Luchadores … A popular *technico* practically since his debut … His mat techniques, especially his armbars, are feared the world over.



161 CHAD COLLYER (5'10", 218, 8, 154) If Dean Malenko was Dr. Evil, Collyer would be his Mini-Me … Two-time NCAA national finalist in wrestling (1995 and 1997) … Made it to the semifinals of the 2000 Super 8 Tournament … Adopted Malenko's Texas cloverleaf as his finisher and also boasts a wide variety of suplexes, just like "The Iceman" … Has plenty of international experience and has made numerous appearances in WWE … Briefly served as part of Jeff Jarrett's Elite Guard in TNA in 2004 … A Ring of Honor mainstay who also competes in IWA-Mid South … Also training in mixed martial arts in Ohio.

162 VAMPIRO (6'2", 214, 15, NL) Controversial Lucha star made a jump from CMLL to AAA in the spring and took his friend Shocker with him … Instantly became a sensation upon arrival in AAA's ring, a big step up from the CMLL mid-card … A former NWA lightweight champion … Sometimes referred to as Vampiro Canadienese, or "Canadian Vampire" … Former WCW star has tons of experience all over the world in all different styles … Still pops up in Japan and Puerto Rico from time to time … Seems to have buried his longstanding personal grudge with Konnan … Known for his precision kicks, especially to knock an opponent off his feet … His nail in the coffin is a Michinoku driver.

163 RIKISHI (6'2", 423, 18, 95) The big Samoan has been enjoying post-WWE life … Currently wrestles mainly in Italy, but also pops up in the U.S. and other parts of Europe … Teamed with Riki Choshu on Zero One's Hustle 5 show in September 2004 … Still loved by fans of all ages … Has held numerous singles and tag team titles throughout his career … Many tag titles were won as a member of the Samoan Swat Team with Samu … One of the few guys remaining on the circuit that can actually claim to have defeated Kerry and Kevin Von Erich for the WCCW tag title.

164 TATSUHITO TAKAIWA (5'10", 208, 11, NL) Master of the Death Valley driver started his career in the junior heavyweight ranks of New Japan Pro Wrestling as the partner of Koji Kanemoto and Shinjiro Otani … Now competes for Otani's Zero-One Max group, which rose from the ashes of Shinya Hashimoto's original Zero-One Fighting Athlete … Feared for his vicious lariats that can knock opponents out cold … Popularized the repeating power bomb in Japan … Sometimes converts it into his Death Valley driver … One of Japan's most underrated performers, he is consistently excellent in both singles and tag matches.

165 JOHNNY SWINGER (6', 231, 12, 123) Released from TNA only to sign a WWE developmental contract … Currently assigned to the Atlanta developmental promotion where he's training daily with kids almost half his age and experience … Was part of the ECW defenders at One Night Stand, challenging the JBL-led anti-ECW contingent … Trained alongside Edge, Christian, and Rhyno … A tag team specialist who spent many years teamed with Simon Diamond in both TNA and ECW … It'll be interesting to see how he fares as a singles competitor after spending so many years in the tag team ranks.

166 BISON SMITH (6'3", 277, 6, 193) Native of Boulder, Colorado, competes in Puerto Rico's IWA and is a top star in Pro Wrestling NOAH … Beat Shane for the IWA Intercontinental title … Aligned himself with the hated Savio Vega and became Savio's top weapon in his effort to gain control of the IWA … Has been frequently compared to Vader in terms of style, though he is much leaner than the former WCW champ … Pet moves include his Bisontennial version of the Styles clash and his iron claw.

167 BLACK WARRIOR (5'7", 201, 19, 115) High-flying CMLL star regularly fluctuates between the *technicos* and *rudos* … His tope through the ropes is famous throughout Mexico, as he routinely ends up five rows deep into the audience … Also wrestled as Vegas and Destroyer early in his career … Nephew of mat master Blue Panther, they were in a stable together called Los Laguneros … A former NWA lightweight champion … One of CMLL's most promising young wrestlers, he carved out his niche in the 1990s and has a solid fan following … Pet finisher is *nudo lagunero,* a leglock in which he deadlifts his opponents off the mat to increase the pressure on the hold.

168 BLUE PANTHER (5'6", 211, 27, 127) Mexican mat wizard now teams with fellow veteran Atlantis to face down *rudo* tag teams in CMLL … The uncle of fellow Luchador Black Warrior … Has wrestled all over the world, but confines most of his activity to Mexico … Held the CMLL trios title a few years back with Fuerza Guerrera and Dr. Wagner Jr. … Was also a star for AAA, UWA, and PROMELL in the past … His only big match in the States came at the 1994 When Worlds Collide pay-per-view broadcast from Los Angeles by AAA … Technical prowess has gotten him compared to Ric Flair … Makes opponents tap out to his Fujiwara armbar.

169 SONNY SIAKI (5'10", 242, 6, 122) The former X division champion has been with TNA since the company's inception … Spent part of 2004 working with then-valet Desire in a feud with Goldylocks … Has perhaps more nicknames than anyone else in wrestling, going by "The Ace In The Hole," "Mr. Number One," and "Cocky Siaki" … Fared well in feuds with D-Lo Brown and Jerry Lynn … Obviously he thinks very highly of himself … Briefly teamed with Ekmo Fatu … Seems to have found a solid partner in Puerto Rican sensation Apolo … Finishing move is the Siakalypse, a dangerous swinging neckbreaker.

170 DICK TOGO (5'9", 219, 14, 230) Once known as the masked character Sato in the days of Gran Hamada's Universal promotion … Rose to fame through the ranks of Michinoku Pro before having a forgettable stay in the WWF seven years ago … Appears all over the Japanese scene these days, from Zero-One to New Japan … Was part of The Legion of Violence in Osaka Pro, and led the now-defunct Kaientai Deluxe stable of the 1990s … A former British Commonwealth junior champion … Affiliated with the CTU stable in New Japan … Likes to plant his opponents with a pedigree to set them in position for his signature move, the top-rope senton.

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171 ACE STEEL (5'9", 220, 13, 196) The veteran member of the Second City Saints in ROH … Not sure what happens to him now that SCS leader C.M. Punk is in WWE … Held a slew of titles, including IWA Mid-South light heavyweight, AWA tag, NWA tag, and Steel Domain Wrestling TV … Currently calling World League Wrestling his home in the U.S. and Pro Wrestling NOAH his Japanese home … Does dark matches and extra work for WWE when needed … Feuded with Generation Next in ROH.

172 ELEKTRO (6'1", 215, 13, 169) Formerly known as Electro Shock when he wrestled for AAA, the man now called Elektro went independent in May, and has even appeared on some CMLL cards of late … Brother of fellow Luchador Charly Manson … Married Lady Apache, who also wrestles, in the ring … Wears a small mask over his mouth and nose, like the one used to restrain Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence Of The Lambs* … Spent many years as a *rudo*, but turned *technico* in 2003 and started to show off his technical skills … Dabbled in mixed martial arts competition but was destroyed by Hikaru Sato … Held the Mexican title for a short stint … Now a regular fixture with IWRG, where he's vying to win the promotion's championship.

173 LOW-KI (5'7", 175, 6, 116) Still one of the most intense wrestlers on the scene today … Jumped ship from Zero One in Japan to Pro Wrestling NOAH last year … Although he can controversial, he does it eloquently … Maybe he can teach that to Teddy Hart … When he's not in Japan, Ki can be found in the New York area indies, ECWA, ROH, or Europe … Former TNA X division and ROH heavyweight champ … His kicks are some of the most wicked in the business … A member of The Rottweilers in ROH, managed by Julius Smokes.

174 SETH SKYFIRE (5'10", 195, 4, 257) The former skateboarding champion was named Ohio Valley Wrestling's Most Improved Wrestler of 2004 … First cut his teeth in the Alabama independents before moving on to OVW … A two-time OVW Southern tag team champion with Mac Johnson … Idolized Randy Savage, Shawn Michaels, and Bret Hart and all of those early influences—especially Michaels—can be seen in his ring style … Could still use another 20 pounds of muscle if he wants to compete in WWE.

175 GIANT BERNARD (6'6", 360, 7, 105) The former A-Train is choo-chooing along in All-Japan Pro Wrestling after being released by WWE in November 2004 … Often teams with Chuck Palumbo and Johnny Stamboli to face Taiyo Kea and Jamal … Currently holds the Impact Zone Wrestling heavyweight title that he won in February 2005 … His nonconformist appearance will always make him stand out in a crowd … That's a nice way of saying he's a heavily-haired, heavily-pierced young gentleman … Still uses the Baldo bomb as his finisher.

176 JIMMY JACOBS (5'7", 169, 6, 268) "The Barbaric Berzerker" is a crowd favorite with his Berzerker-inspired wooly boots and *"Huss! Huss!"* catchphrase (if you can call it that) … Couldn't resemble The Berzerker less if he tried … A native of "Goof City, USA," Jacobs competes primarily in Ring of Honor and Border City Wrestling … Also wrestles in IWA Mid-South and the IWC … Won the ROH tag title with B.J. Whitmer … It's an unlikely team, but they're doing well … Jacobs and Whitmer occasionally use a doomsday device-type finisher, with Jacobs hitting a huracanrana from the top rope … Jacobs sometimes carries a spike given to him by Kevin Sullivan inside his furry boots.

177 RICKY REYES (5'9", 192, 6, 194) The other half of the Havana Pit Bulls alongside Rocky Romero … A tag team specialist who has culled several regional tag titles, including UPW, MPW, IWC, ROH, and EWF … Has also held the UPW light heavyweight and IWC heavyweight titles … A member of The Rottweilers in ROH, under the astute leadership of Julius Smokes … Currently embarking on a singles career in ROH after a lengthy reign as tag champs with Romero … Also a frequent competitor for New Japan USA, Pro Wrestling Guerrilla, and other Southern California promotions.

178 TAIYO KEA (6'1" 235, 11, NL) Formerly known as Maunukea Mossman in the days of Giant Baba's All-Japan Pro Wrestling, he changed his ring name a few years back … Born in Honolulu, but trained to wrestle in Japan … Has bounced back from a number of harrowing injuries, but isn't as quick as he used to be … Still competes for All-Japan, and even teams occasionally with Keiji Muto, as the two had a great championship run just a few years ago … Takes incredible punishment in his matches, but keeps coming back for more … Precision chops and kicks are his signature strikes … Favorite finisher is called the Hawaiian smasher—it's a fireman's carry he turns into an Ace crusher.

179 PUMA (5'9", 180, 5, NL) This West Coast competitor is creating quite a buzz on the indy scene with his Japanese *puroresu* style … Trained in the New Japan USA Dojo … Heavily influenced by the original Tiger Mask (Satoru Sayama) … Has held the APW Internet and UIWA light heavyweight titles … Has also appeared in ROH, TNA, MLW, and Mexico's CMLL, among other promotions … Made it to the finals of the 2005 Super 8 Tournament with wins over Eric Matlock and J.J. Perez—before falling to Petey Williams … Possesses lightning-quick speed and excellent counterwrestling abilities … Favors the Tiger suplex and figure-four deathlock.

180 MATT STRYKER (5'11", 215, 6, 148) Don't mess with the brow … This former Heartland favorite horrified fans by turning against his friend Cody Hawk and embarking on a rulebreaking rampage … Has held the HWA heavyweight and cruiserweight titles, but sadly, gave up his title of "Mr. Congeniality" when he attacked Hawk … Challenged Kurt Angle on *Smackdown* in the Angle Invitational … When he's not doing WWE dark matches or competing in HWA, he also competes in Ring Of Honor, NWA Cyberspace, and Irish Whip Wrestling … Finishers include the Stryker driver and the Stryker lock.

181 GEDO (5'7", 215, 12, 252) New Japan junior heavyweight is now part of the heel stable referred to simply as CTU … Also in the group is his long-time tag team partner, Jado, and Jushin Liger … A former IWGP junior tag champion … Drew rave reviews for his matches against American Dragon and Curry Man last year … Made it to the finals of this year's Best of the Super Junior Tournament, but was defeated by Tiger Mask IV … Rose to prominence in Team No Respect alongside Kodo Fuyuki … Has a great pinning combination in his barrel roll variation he calls the Gedo clutch.

182 LATIN LOVER (5'9", 199, 13, 46) Mainstay of AAA has been a *technico* virtually all of his career … Popular character has spawned a few clones over the years, notably fellow AAA star Intocable … Sometimes guest stars on Mexican soap operas … Usually competes in trios matches … A former National light heavyweight champion … Muscular exotic dancer is an all-time favorite with the female fans of AAA … Known for his long, dark hair and cat-like reflexes … Hasn't seen a lot of action in the U.S., but some remember his appearance at the 1997 Royal Rumble … Favorite finishing move is the superkick.

183 RAY GONZALEZ (6'1", 230, 15, NL) Widely considered to be the best all-around wrestler in Puerto Rico these days … Has had a long-running feud with Savio "The Boss" Vega, with control of the IWA at stake … Held the IWA title until Vega usurped control of the IWA and stripped him of the championship … Gonzalez won the title back from Vega, only to lose it to Apolo … Gonzalez is currently in possession of the papers that give him control of the promotion, but for how long? … The most beloved wrestler in Puerto Rico today.

184 AKIRA TAUE (6'5", 272, 17, 279) Former All-Japan Triple Crown champ is now a star with Mitsuharu Misawa's NOAH promotion … Challenged Kenta Kobashi for the Global Honored Crown in the last year and gave his best showing in some time, despite losing the bout … Has lost a lot of his speed and agility over the years … In-ring pace is methodical, to say the least … Best known for his days tagging with Toshiaki Kawada for AJPW … Still wears his familiar red trunks and boots … Master of the *nodowa otoshi*, a low elevation, two-handed choke-slam that he can execute from anywhere, even from the apron to the floor.

185 SIMON DIAMOND (6'2", 225, 13, 78) After a brief identity crisis in TNA, Pat's back to plain ol' Simon … Simon says he'd rather use this name … This young veteran is one of the unheralded journeymen of his time … One of the best promo guys in the business if given the microphone … A finesse wrestler who is better known for his mat work than his brawling … Finally resurfaced in TNA after a name change and a partner change, as Swinger is now with WWE … Competed in Japan this year for Zero One.

186 HARRY SMITH (6'5", 225, 10, 262) The lanky son of Davey Boy Smith is a puppy with big paws … Started wrestling in front of crowds at age nine … Upset Petey Williams in the first round of the Natural title tournament at Ballpark Brawl 2 in Buffalo last July … Claims to have turned down several offers from WWE in order to gain international experience … Teams with T.J. Wilson and The Stampede Bulldogs … Uses a running powerslam as a tribute to his father … Unlike his father, Harry also uses several Japanese-style moves, including the Emerald frosion and dragon sleeper … Suffered a broken hand that required surgery on his first tour of Japan.

187 JULIO DINERO (6'2", 235, 11, 149) Formerly part of The Gathering with Raven and C.M. Punk in TNA … Reprised his pairing with C.M. Punk at NWA Cyberspace to win the tag straps from The Solution on their first night together for the company, May 21, 2005 … Unfortunately, the reunion didn't last as C.M. Punk is gone from Cyberspace … Just another bad break for this young veteran … A very talented wrestler who rarely gets a good chance to shine … Wrestles all over the Northeast for various independents … Sometimes wrestles dark matches for WWE … Still has potential, if a promoter is willing to capitalize on it.

188 TODD SHANE (6'3", 278, 8, 208) A former NWA Florida heavyweight champion, but Todd is best known for his tag team with twin brother Mike … The twins are former NWA, NWA Florida, IPW, and Jersey All Pro tag team champions and have signed WWE developmental contracts … Todd is well-known in gyms around Tampa, Florida, for routinely squatting 800 pounds … The brothers have toured Japan, Puerto Rico, Peru, and have competed throughout the U.S. … Starred in a commercial for the Florida Lottery and several commercials for Sonny's BBQ … Briefly competed under masks as the Johnsons in TNA.

189 SKAYDE (5'7", 174, 20, 201) Head trainer at Ultimo Dragon's Toryumon gym in Nuacalpan, Mexico … One of Lucha Libre's most gifted technical wrestlers … Has trained the majority of the Toryumon roster and many of Mexico's biggest stars … Wrestles under the name Destello for the ENESMA promotion, and under his real name of Jorge Rivera for the Toryumon … Masked Luchador has appeared only sporadically in the United States and Japan … Inventor of hundreds of holds and moves … Has wrestled in the U.S. for companies like CHIKARA, PWE, FNW, and CZW … Relatively unknown outside of his native Mexico … His bearhug spun into a face-slam is a solid move.

190 MIKE SHANE (6'3", 276, 8, 207) Mike and identical twin brother Todd are former NWA, NWA Florida, IPW, and Jersey All Pro tag team champions … The brothers signed a WWE developmental contract in January and are part of the Deep South developmental territory in Georgia … Mike was a top contender to the heavyweight title in Full Impact Pro before he signed with WWE … Studied under Dean Malenko, though his power-based style bears little resemblance to Malenko's … Long-time member of Ron Niemi's 911 Incorporated stable in Florida.

PWI 500

191 CIMA (5'11", 202, 8, 135) The top star of the Toryumon group joined Tokyo Magnum's renegade promotion Dragon Gate last summer, as did many of his Toryumon cohorts … Has since taken a leave of absence from Dragon Gate and has popped up in Mexico, wrestling for AAA and other groups as well … Lost in the finals of the 2000 Super J Cup in a career-making bout with Jushin Liger … Won the El Numero Uno in 2003, beating Genki Horiguchi for the trophy … Former leader of the Crazy Max stable that terrorized Toryumon and Michinoku Pro rings for years … Likes to set up his iconoclasm from the turnbuckles with an uppercut blow known as Venus.

192 DANNY DANIELS (5'8", 203, 8, 247) The former ECW referee is a tag team champion in Border City Wrestling with N8 Mattson … Career highlight to date was winning the 24-man Ted Petty Invitational Tournament in 2003 … Trained by Al Snow … Frequently competes in Ring of Honor … Teamed with Masada as The New Carnage Crew in ROH and feuded with Loc and DeVito … Uses several variations of the piledriver to defeat his opponents … Almost always gives up a significant size advantage.

193 JACK EVANS (5'8", 165, 5, 214) The high-flying sensation out of P-Town, Washington, teamed with Teddy Hart to win the Jersey All Pro tag title from Homicide and B-Boy in a cage match in March 2005 … Part of Generation Next in ROH … Was given the rights to the Blitzkrieg name and gimmick but suffered a scary neck injury in his first match under the Blitzkrieg hood … Was managed by Jim Cornette for one bout last year … Currently feuding with former Generation Next leader Alex Shelley … A death-defying aerialist, Evans is known for his magnificent corkscrew 630 splash.

194 GLAMOR BOY SHANE (6', 225, 12, NL) One of the most established non-native wrestlers to compete in Puerto Rico over the past several years … A seven-time IWA heavyweight champion … Stunned the fans when he turned against Ray Gonzalez and aligned himself with the hated Savio Vega … Now known as The Canadian Glamor Boy, which just doesn't go over well in Puerto Rico … A skilled technician, but Shane is best known for his hot temper and brawling ways … Extremely fast with his "elbow from heaven," and very dangerous when coming off the ropes.

195 STEVE LEWINGTON (6'2", 220, 1, NL) Soft-spoken Englishman has a body that looks like it was chiseled out of granite … Outside interests include bodybuilding, martial arts, rugby, and aviation … Actually has a degree in aeronautical engineering and applied to be a pilot in the Royal Air Force, but his eyesight was not good enough … Great vertical leap makes for crisp and flashy dropkicks … Extremely popular with the ladies … Imagine Hugh Grant with a bodybuilder's body … Definitely one of OVW's top prospects.

196 OSAMU NISHIMURA (6'1", 220, 13, 211) Classic mat wrestler has honed his craft all over the world, in his home promotion of New Japan Pro Wrestling to Mexico's CMLL, in which he feuded with Dr. Wagner Jr., to the rings of Dory Funk Jr.'s conservatory in Florida … Has been a New Japan mainstay for the majority of his career, and fans have embraced his clean technical style … Protege of Tatsumi Fujinami has rebounded from a battle with cancer and is in the prime of his career … Favors holds like the royal octopus and the abdominal stretch … Held the IWGP tag title with Hiroyoshi Tenzan a few years back … Famed for his picture-perfect dropkick and textbook Northern Lights suplex.

197 ALEBRIJE (6'1", 219, 9, 188) Beloved *technico* of AAA is a decided favorite with young fans … Wears a colorful, winged costume based on Mexican mythology … "Mascot" Cuije is a virtually identical, albeit miniature version of Alebrije, but he doesn't compete in the minis division … Has lost his hair in the past, but never his mask, thanks to bizarre AAA stipulation matches … He and Cuije have been fighting the full-sized Luchador Monsther and his tiny sidekick, Chucky, for years on end … Taller than the average Luchador, his gaudy and ornate ring uniforms make him stand out in any match … One of Lucha Libre's most overlooked performers, he's finally becoming a regular main event player.

198 HOTSTUFF HERNANDEZ (6'6", 295, 6, 158) This former hot prospect has cooled down considerably in the past year … Has wrestled all over the world during his relatively short career … All-Japan capitalized upon his striking resemblance to Kurt Angle last year, letting it be part of his gimmick … Now wrestles mainly in his home state of Texas for promotions like Xtreme Championship Wrestling and Professional Championship Wrestling … Has held a slew of regional titles, including the Wildside title, NWA Texas, NWA North American, NWA National, ETW heavyweight, and TASW heavyweight belts … Quite a power merchant.

199 DAVID YOUNG (6'1", 246, 6, 206) Two-time former NWA Wildside champion is probably wondering why he even bothers to show up for TNA *Impact* tapings these days … Young has taken the art of losing to new lows with one reverse Goldberg-esque losing streak after another … TNA losses aside, Young is a formidable grappler with many regional titles to his credit … Trained by Larry Santo … Has an absolutely lethal spinebuster (when he's able to land it) … Teamed with Sonny Siaki to win the Georgia Championship Wrestling tag team title in July 2004.

200 M-DOGG 20 (5'7", 177, 6, 233) Competes as both M-Dogg 20 and Matt Cross … Has a long-running relationship with John Prohibition that has seen them feud and team … Won the UWA heavyweight title in Toronto … Made it to the finals of a cruiserweight tournament for WXW in Germany … Also competed in a seven-show tour of Ireland, including two matches against the recently unretired Jody Fleisch … Uses his gymnastics background to perform visually amazing moves such as the flagpole press and his jackknife shooting star press … Called "The Innovator Of Aerial Insanity."

191-210

201 TYSON DUX (5'10", 185, 8, 313) The man formerly known as "Textbook" Tyson Dux is back in the ring after undergoing major knee surgery ... Was scheduled to compete in the 2004 Super 8, but tore his ACL just weeks before the event ... Finally made it to the Super 8 this year, losing to J.J. Perez in the opening round ... Native of Windsor, Ontario, was trained by Scott D'Amore and Terry Taylor ... A three-time tag champion in Border City ... Has been wrestling in WWE dark matches for the past three years—his pigeon walk-style dance always gets a good crowd reaction ... Favors a traditional old school style and puts opponents away with a Japanese armbar or DDT.

202 KEVIN NORTHCUTT (6'6", 260, 11, 186) The big man formerly from Red Shirt Security had his shining moment as an NWA tag team champion with Legend ... Unfortunately that reign lasted only one week ... Trained by Sika the Wild Samoan ... Has feuded with Erik Watts, Don Harris, and Raven ... Also frequently teamed with Ryan Wilson ... Recently scored a win over B.G. James in the Alabama Wrestling Federation ... Appeared on WWF TV way back in 1999 ... Extremely powerful competitor with a staggering superkick ... Was briefly managed by Percy Pringle (Paul Bearer) in Louisiana's All Access Wrestling.

203 JOSH DANIELS (5'9", 211, 4, 209) This youngster is reminiscent of Chris Benoit in both style and size ... Versatile wrestler who excels in both singles and tag team matches ... Mainly wrestles in Northeast independents ... Has extensive Japanese experience for someone just four years into his pro career ... A former Pro Wrestling World-1 tag champ and the current NWA Cyberspace Internet champ ... Finishes off opponents with a diving headbutt or a Dragon suplex ... Has all the ingredients to make a stellar career for himself.

204 EDDIE COLON (5'10", 225, 4, NL) The son of Puerto Rican legend Carlos Colon and the brother of WWE Intercontinental champion Carlito Caribbean Cool ... Had an intense feud with his brother last year ... The WWC universal champion, Eddie has taken after his father and defended that belt against all comers, including Stevie Richards ... Eddie was betrayed by close friend Eric Alexander when Carlito convinced Alexander that Eddie was holding him back from winning the universal title ... Uses the figure-four leglock in honor of his father ... Has less experience than Carlito, but perhaps even more potential.

205 YUJI NAGATA (6'1", 228, 13, 96) The man fans nicknamed "Mr. IWGP" just a few years ago went from being Japan's hottest commodity to career purgatory ... Consistent performer is all but removed from the title picture in his home promotion of New Japan Pro Wrestling ... Set the record for IWGP heavyweight title defenses back in 2003 ... Ventures into mixed martial arts competition proved disastrous ... A technical wizard with a strong amateur wrestling background ... Had a short, forgettable stint in WCW ... Relies on his repertoire of hard kicks and submission holds ... Loves to force opponents to tap out to his three different NagataLock submissions.

206 TONY KOZINA (5'6", 177, 8, 215) "Tornado" Tony has been busy defending his third NWA Canadian junior heavyweight title from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory, and all points in between ... Finisher is the tornado death twist (TDT), a spinning facebuster ... Debuted in Ring of Honor with a win over AngelDust ... Stunned the fans by walking out of a Portland Wrestling TV taping, saying he would never return ... Now competing as a heel throughout California and on the East Coast ... Received the 2004 Mike Lockwood Memorial Award in Pro Wrestling IRON ... Has wrestled several WWE dark matches.

207 B.J. WHITMER (6'1", 230, 5, 198) The straight man to funnyman Jimmy Jacobs in their impressive tag team ... Held the ROH tag title with Jacobs at press time ... Also held the belts twice before with Dan Maff ... Trained under Les Thatcher and toured Japan in his rookie year ... Also competes in IWA-Mid-South and has held that promotion's heavyweight title twice ... Old-fashioned wrestler utilizes Japanese-style exploder variations and is dangerous off the top rope ... Scored a win over Billy Gunn in an April IWA bout ... Won the 2002 Ted Petty Invitational Tournament ... Whitmer has wrestled in some of the bloodiest matches in ROH history.

208 CHUCK PALUMBO (6'2", 256, 5, 114) Palumbo has been staying busy competing in Japan and for Ultimate Pro Wrestling since being released from WWE last November ... Best known for his flamboyant tag team with Billy Gunn and their "commitment ceremony" in September 2002 ... Trained at the WCW Power Plant and first gained prominence as a member of The Natural Born Thrillers ... Was briefly a part of the Full-Blooded Italians before being traded to Raw ... Often teams with Johnny Stamboli and Giant Bernard (A-Train) in Japan ... Has an impressive superkick and shoulder block off the top rope, as well as a Lex Luger-inspired backbreaker.

209 ULTIMO DRAGON (5'8", 186, 20, 134) Leader of the Mexico-based Toryumon X recently launched a new Japanese venture called Dragon Door to oppose rival group Dragon Gate ... Appears frequently with both New Japan Pro Wrestling and CMLL ... Gave up his Dragon identity last year and sometimes wrestles as Second Tiger ... Botched elbow surgery was thought to have ended his career years ago ... His 2003-2004 stint with WWE was forgettable ... Made waves in the early-1990s under his given name of Yoshihiro Asai, feuding with Negro Casas ... A former IWGP junior, WCW cruiserweight and J-Crown champion ... Now uses the Asai DDT as a finisher.

210 B-BOY (5'10", 198, 6, 218) This Southern California native is one of the hottest prospects on the independent scene ... He has held slew of titles from all parts of the country ... Made it to the finals of this year's CZW Best of the Best Tournament, an event he won in 2003 ... Teams with Homicide in JAPW, in which they held the tag belts ... A brutal competitor who can beat opponents with either his fists or his technical arsenal ... That explains why he has hardcore and cruiserweight title reigns to his credit.

PWI 500

211 MASADA (6'3", 235, 4, 240) This Texan has blazed a trail of destruction through the Southeast, most notably in NWA Wildside and Florida's Impact Pro … Former Carnage Crew member in Ring of Honor, in which he was involved in some of the most violent matches in the pormotion's history … Teamed with Todd Sexton in Wildside as The Texas Death Club to win the tag title … Also competes in IWA Mid-South … In his spare time, he's a death metal musician … Why not? Death metal fits the tattooed look he sports.

212 JINSEI SHINZAKI (5'10", 207, 12, 232) President and head trainer at Japan's northeastern Michinoku Pro company, he took over for long-reigning head Great Sasuke when Sasuke's political career took off … Japanese middleweight has traveled the world and wrestled in the WWF for a year under the moniker Hakushi—he was covered in tattoos and managed by Shinja … Has wrestled for New Japan, All-Japan Pro Wrestling, and FMW during his career … Slow, methodical wrestler … Former teammate of Hayabusa … Has cat-like agility and can walk the ropes effortlessly … His signature move is the praying power bomb, but he sometimes likes to make opponents submit to his straightjacket camel clutch.

213 JOHN WALTERS (6', 222, 5, 236) "The Hurricane" held the ECWA heavyweight title from May 2004 to February 2005 … Broadened his fan base with his run as Ring of Honor pure champion … After dropping the ECWA title, Walters decided to take a little bit of time off to heal some nagging injuries … However, he suffered a severe neck injury in his last ECWA appearance in March and had to be helped from the ring … A return date has yet to be set … Competed in the 2004 Super 8 Tournament, beating Nicho (Psicosis) before losing to Austin Aries … A soft-spoken technical wrestler in the mold of Chris Benoit and Lance Storm.

214 DR. X (5'8", 193, 10, NL) Former National welterweight champion is quickly becoming a sensation with CMLL fans … Hard-working undercard star is also a former trios champion … Regularly teams with the likes of Nitro and Hooligan against CMLL's *technicos* … Originally wrestled as Dr. O'Borman Jr. until legal problems prompted a name change … Loosely affiliated with Los Guerreros del Infierno … As adept at power moves as he is flying in and out of the ring … A submission specialist, his pet move is like an upside-down Boston crab in which his opponent's hands get trapped beneath him.

215 SCOTT D'AMORE (5'11", 247, 12, NL) "One thing I know about the rest of my life/I know that I'll be living here in Canada" … That may be a line to a song by the Canadian band Sloan, but it could be D'Amore's credo as well … The rotund coach of TNA's Team Canada is a true veteran … Competed in WCW from 1993 to 1996, once scoring a win over Dallas Page … Also competed for WWE and ECW … Believe it or not, he has a nifty little moonsault and is a tremendous submission wrestler … Claims to be retired, but was goaded into matches against Dusty Rhodes and Jerry Lynn, and looked good in both bouts.

216 MIKE KRUEL (5'10", 225, 5, 243) The former ECWA heavyweight champion got a chance to shut JBL's mouth by answering Layfield's "Rocky Challenge" in Philadelphia, but couldn't get the job done … An extremely skilled submission-style grappler who's known as "The Shooter" … Looks a bit like a slightly smaller Brock Lesnar … A second-generation wrestler, Kruel is the son of veteran Bodyguard For Hire … Has feuded with John Walters, Austin Aries, Striker, Cheetah Master, and Fred Sampson … Has also appeared in Ring of Honor, Chaotic Wrestling, 3PW, and USA Pro … Could become a force in the ROH pure title picture, as that style suits him perfectly.

217 RICKY BANDERAS (6', 245, 8, NL) The most dangerous chair-swinging freak in Puerto Rico … Considered one of the most dangerous wrestlers in the IWA, both because of his brutal chair shots and his willingness to sacrifice his own body to inflict pain on others … Actually got wilder when IWA management started cracking down on his violent attacks, as he now gets fined every time he uses a chair … Held the IWA Intercontinental and hardcore titles simultaneously twice in 2004 … Aligned with Ray Gonzalez in his feud with Savio Vega … Feuded with Bison Smith and Hangman Hughes.

218 JAY LETHAL (5'9", 192, 3, NL) This former Special K member in ROH has become the year's hottest singles prospect on the Northeast independents … Wrestles primarily for Ring of Honor and Jersey All Pro, in which he is the current heavyweight champion … Has already held multiple titles in JAPW, UCW, and JCW … Outside of the ring, he's a college student studying multimedia … Trained by Mikey Whipwreck, but mentored by Dan Maff … Finishes off opponents with his Jaytrix, a matrix kick.

219 MINORU TANAKA (5'8", 201, 7, 107) Sometimes referred to simply as MINORU these days, he spent the last couple of years under the gaudy disguise of Heat in his home promotion of New Japan Pro Wrestling, but the character was a flop … Started his career in Big Japan Pro Wrestling around the same time Yoshihiro Tajiri was there … Has competed in Mexico … A former IWGP junior tag champ with partner Koji Kanemoto … Affiliated with the CTU heel stable in New Japan … Held the IWGP junior heavyweight title twice as Tanaka and once as Heat … Trademark finisher is the Minoru special, a Northern Lights suplex floated into *jujigatamae.*

220 FELINO (5'7", 190, 23, 200) Super-quick *technico* is the son of Pepe Casas and the brother of Negro Casas and Heavy Metal … One of the oldest active Luchadores on the CMLL roster, he defies nature by remaining one of the most agile men in Mexico … A former CMLL welterweight and trios champion … Recently won a 10-man cibernetico, last defeating Mephisto … Cat-like reflexes help him both on the mat and in the air … Also wrestles frequently for the Naucalpan-based IWRG group … His signature bodysuit is complete with tiger stripes and fur, making him easy to identify … Favorite move is a seated power bomb from the turnbuckles.

211-230

221 HEAVY METAL (5'7", 181, 17, 184) Brother of Negro Casas and Felino ended his decade-long stay with AAA this year and joined his brothers in CMLL … Lost his long locks in a hair match more than a year ago, and has since kept his hair relatively short … Son of legendary referee Pepe Casas … Wears an odd combination of checkered pants and racing goggles to the ring, sometimes even wearing the goggles to wrestle … Former National welterweight champion is the current IWRG champion … Appeared at the 1997 Royal Rumble in a trios match … Popped up in the States for TNA, but hasn't done much with the company lately … Uses his father's pet hold, *la casita,* better known as *la magistral.*

222 MIKE MONDO (5'7", 229, 3, 328) Godzilla feats Mike Mondo, at least according to Kenny Bolin … "The Giant Killer" is one of the trainers at the OVW Training School … Most of his peers feel WWE has made a mistake by not bringing him up, as his charisma and comic timing—not to mention his wrestling skills—are tremendous … Won the New York Wrestling Connection heavyweight title with a win over Joey Matthews in March … Dropped that belt to Matt Striker … Serves as the diminutive enforcer of Bolin Services … Often compared to Crash Holly … Actually lost to Alexis Laree in a tournament for the OVW TV title, thanks to interference from Brent Albright … Also lost to Victoria after he foolishly challenged any woman in the arena.

223 JOSH PROHIBITION (6', 200, 4, 241) Prohibition has come a long way from his backyard days and is earning respect as a talented and innovative commodity … Has defended the CAPW junior heavyweight title against Nigel McGuinness, Alex Shelley, Matt Striker, Chris Sabin, Petey Williams, and on-again/off-again partner M-Dogg 20 … Faced Austin Aries for the ROH heavyweight title on a UWA card in Toronto … Calls his double-underhook piledriver finisher the drunken driver … A former UWA light heavyweight and PWA heavyweight champion.

224 VANCE NEVADA (5'11", 214, 12, 298) "Mr. Beefy Goodness" is still fighting to make a bald head and hairy chest fashionable … Good luck with that … One of the most visible wrestlers on the Canadian independent circuit … First cracked the "*PWI* 500" back in 1994, but this is his highest ranking to date … Mainly a singles competitor, but sometimes teams with Dropkick Murphy as Canadian Flava in Portland Wrestling … Dropped the Extreme Canadian championship in November 2004, ending a 14-month reign … Has wrestled some big names, including The Honky Tonk Man, Tatanka, Jack Evans, and American Dragon … An active wrestling archivist and historian.

225 DEUCE SHADE (6'2", 230, 6, 334) Previously known as Jimmy Snuka Jr. and is the legitimate son of "The Superfly" … Like his father, likes to use the Superfly splash as his finisher … A former Mr. Hawaiian Islands in bodybuilding … Won the tournament to crown a new OVW TV champion in June 2005, beating Ken Doane in the finals … Previously teamed with The Predator in Japan's Zero-One promotion … Competed in independent promotions on both the East and West coasts before receiving a WWE developmental deal and settling down in OVW.

226 BRONCO (5'9", 235, 23, NL) Native of the Dominican Republic has made Puerto Rico his home base since 1991 … Was the island nation's top heel for most of the past year, until he was attacked by his friend Rico Suave … A wild feud ensured between the former partners … Held the WWC universal and Puerto Rican championships simultaneously for a few weeks in 2004 … Compact, muscular frame affords him a low center of gravity that gives him leverage over bigger foes.

227 THE BLUE MEANIE (5'11", 285, 11, 234) Apparently, getting your tail kicked by JBL is a good career move. Who knew! … The Blue Guy reunited with Stevie Richards and Nova in the Blue World Order at One Night Stand, only to get brutalized by JBL during the impromptu battle royal … The buzz on that incident was enough for Meanie to consider filing a lawsuit because of the injuries he suffered … Instead, he settled for a *Smackdown* match against the self-proclaimed "wrestling god," leading to the biggest win of Meanie's career, thanks entirely to Batista's interference … Is still in charge of 3PW, despite a recent falling-out with former gal pal Jasmin St. Claire … Regardless of JBL's feelings, Meanie is one of the most charismatic wrestlers out there—though he could use some pointers on how to cover his face during a brawl.

228 DRAGON KID (5'6", 165, 7, 172) Ultimo Dragon's namesake left the Toryumon to join Tokyo Magnum's upstart Dragon Gate promotion this year … Still counted among wrestling's finest high-flyers … Won the 2004 El Numero Uno Tournament … Wrestled extensively in Mexico at the beginning of his career, just like Ultimo Dragon … Famed for two daring variations of the huracanrana, the Dragon ray and his Dragonrana … Unmasked Darkness Dragon a few years back, and the two later became a short-lived tag team … Likes to make opponents tap out to *el cristo,* an unusual head and arm submission hold.

229 TONY JONES (6'5", 265, 8, 213) This Southern California veteran has settled in as a Pro Wrestling Iron mainstay after years on the SoCal indy circuit … Teams with Jason Brisbane … Held the APW universal heavyweight and tag titles … A NCAA California Collegiate champion in 1994 … His extensive amateur background helps him maintain his "Shooter" nickname … His intense, cool demeanor never reveals his emotions—which is a good thing in combat sports … His German automatic finisher of three consecutive German suplexes is devastating.

230 T.J. WILSON (6', 195, 10, 303) "The Stampede Kid" formed a strong tag team with Harry Smith, winning the PWA (Edmonton) tag belts in October 2004 … Started wrestling at age 15 and was trained by Bruce Hart and Davey Boy Smith … Also teams with the controversial Teddy Hart from time to time … Patterns his ring style on his childhood hero, Owen Hart … His favorite moves include the swan dive elbow and his rolling stampede … Has competed in ROH, MLW, Jersey All Pro, and several other promotions and has toured Japan several times … A very promising prospect.

PWI 500

231 RODNEY MACK (6'2", 240, 7, 159) Has been competing primarily in NWA-Cyberspace since being released from WWE ... Trained by The Junkyard Dog, Mack competed in OVW as Redd Dogg and imitated many of JYD's mannerisms ... Was once one of OVW's most popular stars, but became a rulebreaker upon joining WWE ... Held the OVW Southern tag title with Shelton Benjamin ... Has been feuding with Slyck Wagner Brown in recent months ... Was a Louisiana state wrestling champion in the heavyweight division in high school and was an All-American in wrestling and football in college.

232 RODERICK STRONG (5'10", 205, 4, 304) Best known as one-half of Generation Next alongside Jack Evans in Ring of Honor ... Another Kurt Angle Invitational victim, having been defeated by Angle in January 2005 ... Excellent technical wrestler ... Participated in ROH's Best of the Super Juniors Tournament in April ... Wrestles in Florida for FIP and NWA Florida ... Has steadily gained confidence and seasoning this year, bolstering his reputation ... Wrestled C.M. Punk on June 12 in a match that got a standing ovation from the crowd ... Although he lost, Punk put him over as the future of wrestling.

233 SEAN CASEY (5'9", 210, 13, 229) Casey is the only pro wrestler other than Shawn Michaels ever to be featured in the pages of *Playgirl* magazine ... This Cincinnati, Ohio, native was trained by Charlie Fulton and Brian Pillman ... The veteran with the flowing locks has been a dominant Blue Water Championship Wrestling heavyweight champion and has successfully defended the belt against Chris Sabin, Shark Boy, and Tommy Titus ... Like his idol, Michaels, Casey likes to use a superkick to set up his mindblower (inverted Ace crusher) finishing move.

234 MANABU NAKANISHI (6'1", 266, 10, 167) Powerful heavyweight star with New Japan Pro Wrestling infused some life into his dormant career by becoming affiliated with the growing CTU heel stable that also includes Masa Chono and Jushin Liger ... Held the IWGP tag title twice, once in 1999 with partner Yuji Nagata, and once with in 1997 with Satoshi Kojima ... Master of the torture rack, or Argentine backbreaker ... Trained briefly under Karl Gotch in Florida ... Heavyweight is finally finding consistent singles success in New Japan ... WCW fans may remember his brief stint as Kurasawa here in the States, during which he broke Road Warrior Hawk's arm.

235 TARZAN BOY (5'10", 206, 12, NL) Former partner of Rey Bucanero and Ultimo Guerrero now forms La Furia del Norte with fellow *rudos* Hector Garza and El Terrible ... Had a short stint with the WWF years ago under the name Armando Fernandez ... A former CMLL trios champion, as well as a former NWA light heavyweight champ ... Has had his share of troubles with Atlantis and Dr. Wagner Jr. during the last few years ... Handsome young Luchador is the bane of Arena Mexico fans ... Failed in his bid to win the tokohu junior title from Atlantis this past year—the title has since returned to Michinoku Pro ... Famed for his precision armdrags.

236 JERRELLE CLARK (5'6", 180, 6, 305) A frequent tag team partner of Mikey Batts, Clark is known for his spectacular top rope 630 splash ... Hence his nickname "Mr. 630" ... Also likes to use his Clark bar submission and pumphandle face plant ... Started out on the Florida independent scene before debuting in TNA as an X division competitor ... Though he's had some success with Batts, Clark is setting his sights primarily on the X title ... Former NWA Florida X and junior heavyweight champion ... Previously teamed with Cutthroat Bonez as The Cutthroats.

237 SLASH VENOM (6'2", 220, 13, 308) Previously known as Flash Flanagan, Slash Venom has been an integral part of IWA Puerto Rico for the past two years ... Has held the IWA hardcore title several times ... Sustained minor injuries after falling from the second floor of the arena in a wild match against Ricky Banderas ... Like Mick Foley, has a reputation for loving to inflict—and *feel*—pain ... Has feuded with Bison Smith, Hangman Hughes, and anyone else who dares get involved in the hardcore title scene ... Also returned stateside to wrestle in ROH this year.

238 PANTERA (5'7", 188, 20, NL) Independent star of Mexico has been a regular with both AAA and CMLL in the past ... Still remembered for his WWF light heavyweight bouts with Taka Michinoku in the late-1990s ... Black and white striped outfit is known the world over ... Also competes in Japan from time to time ... Famed for his wild suicide dives, including some in which he somersaults onto opponents laying on the arena floor ... Well-regarded as a bona fide mat master ... Also wrestled under the name Triton in years gone by ... A former CMLL welterweight and National light heavyweight titleholder ... His brother also wrestled as Pantera ... Has a graceful moonsault bodyblock.

239 MASATO TANAKA (5'11", 213, 12, 100) Returned to U.S. competition with a hair-raising match against Mike Awesome at the ECW One Night Stand pay-per-view that reprised their brutal old feud ... Wrestles full-time in Japan for Shinjiro Otani's Zero-One Max, the new version of Zero-One Fighting Athlete ... Leads a stable called The Erotics against Otani's Otani-gun army ... Regularly teams with Jun Kasai, Yoshito Sasaki, and others ... Enjoyed fame with FMW as one of the promotion's top stars ... Loves to use the rolling elbow, which people often misinterpret as *roaring* elbow ... Calls his flipping Ace crusher from the middle turnbuckle the diamond dust.

240 SHANE BALLARD (5'9", 195, 6, 21) It's very difficult to distinguish Shane from his identical twin brother, Shannon ... Has worked his love of hockey into a hilarious gimmick ... Opponents aren't laughing, though, since the Ballards are one of the toughest teams around ... Competes all over the West Coast, Canada, and the Northeast ... Has also appeared for WWE in dark matches ... He and his brother are very close in style to The Hardy Boyz ... Inspired by the Hanson brothers from the movie *Slap Shot*.

231-250

241 JOE E. LEGEND (6'3", 252, 9, 274) This Canadian star now finds himself as the toast of Europe, Japan, and South America … Made a name for himself by openly criticizing both Jeff Jarrett and TNA for what he sees as a lack of business tact … Was cast as a trainer for the ill-fated *Celebrity Wrestling* show in England … He had to train a team of wannabe wrestlers for a career in the ring … Unfortunately, the show bombed … May be best remembered as the other half of Sex & Violence with Adam "Edge" Copeland … Given Edge's recent dalliance, we guess Joe was the "violence" part of that team.

242 MIKE QUACKENBUSH (6', 191, 14, 224) The wrestler, author, and trainer has traveled the world and captured more than two dozen championships along the way … Currently feuding with Chris Hero, Claudio Castagnoli, and Arik Cannon in his home promotion, CHIKARA … Credits his new finishing move, the Quackendriver 2, for his recent hot streak … Serves as head trainer at the CHIKARA Wrestle Factory in Philadelphia, but also teaches and wrestles all over Europe … Won the fifth annual Best of the Best Tournament hosted by CZW … Inventor of the black tornado slam and the Lightning lock … Routinely wrestles on the Mexican Lucha Libre circuit.

243 DEAN JABLONSKI (6'3", 275, 9, 255) Absolutely massive physical specimen is a dominant force in Far North Wrestling … Often teams with his brother, Chet, as The A-Squad, but is equally adept at singles competition … The current World Wide Wrestling champion in Cincinnati, Ohio … Dean "The Dream" was the first ever FNW heavyweight champion … Trained by Les Thatcher … Based in Pittsburgh but competes throughout the Midwest.

244 TORU YANO (6'2", 245, 4, NL) Colorful Japanese madman first made his mark at the New Japan Inoki Dojo by intentionally getting himself disqualified in every match for a four-month period … Has impressive technical skills and an amateur background, but chooses to eschew those skills in favor of spitting sake and throwing salt in his opponents' eyes and hitting people with his umbrella … Teams with Adam Pearce as "The Beer And Sake Connection" … Considered a heavy favorite for New Japan's recently revived U-30 title … Recently attacked Nakamura in an effort to break out of the Young Lions division.

245 GREAT SASUKE (5'8", 180, 15, 191) *Senator* Sasuke can now be found in the halls of the Japanese Diet as often as he can be seen flying around the rings of Michinoku Pro, the northeastern independent company he founded back in 1993 … Wrestled as Masa Michinoku and Ninja Sasuke early in his career … Cut his teeth in Gran Hamada's Universal promotion … Won the Tohoku junior title from Mexican legend Atlantis … Lucha-influenced high-flyer has some graceful moonsaults in his repertoire … Was the first man to hold the eight unified J-Crown titles in 1996 … Had brief stints in both the WWF and ECW in the 1990s … Favorite finishers include the royal octopus hold and the thunder fire bomb.

246 CODY HAWK (6'2", 220, 11, 265) After years of being a fixture in the Heartland Wrestling Association, lost his spot when he was betrayed by his partner, Matt Stryker … But before that betrayal, Hawk and Stryker had a run as HWA tag team champions before being stripped of the belts by majority owner Brock Guffman … Beat Shark Boy for the Buckeye Pro Wrestling heavyweight title, a belt he successfully defended against Abyss … Favors the muscle buster as his finisher of choice.

247 DIAMANTE (5'11", 224, 13, NL) Returned to the WWC after initially leaving that promotion for the rival IWA … Turns out the grass wasn't greener on the other side of that fence … Recently returned from a serious back injury … Has held the WWC tag title with both Diabolico and Bronco … Currently searching for a new partner so he can regain that title … Beat Eddie Colon for the universal heavyweight title … Known for his explosive, high-powered offense.

248 SHANNON BALLARD (5'9", 220, 6, 223) Even with the different numbers on their hockey sweaters, we still can't tell him from his twin brother, Shane … The musically inclined brother … In other words, he's the Jeff to Shane's Matt Hardy … Ring style is close to that of the Hardys, too … Competes all over North America … Finisher is the penalty box … A former hockey player, just like his brother.

249 MILANO COLLECTION A.T. (5'11", 179, 5, 231) Star of the defunct Toryumon 2000 Project (T2P), he defected to Dragon Gate with many of his Toryumon classmates, but recently decided to become a free agent … Former leader of the Italian Connection stable … Trained by Skayde in Mexico … Kickstarted his career with a number of lopsided wins over Ryo Saito … Claims to be an Italian supermodel, and typically walks an invisible dog to ringside … Not to be confused with Milantio Collection a.t., the mini version of this wrestler … Loads his arsenal with submission moves like *la nieblina* and his personal favorite, the AT lock arm submission.

250 FRANK PARKER (6'3", 285, 12, 263) "The Tank" briefly considered retirement last year after the death of his father, but has rediscovered his passion for wrestling … Feuding with Rick Steiner and Raven in the Superstar Wrestling Federation … Beat Shady for the SWF hardcore title in May 2005 … Was scheduled to fight The Barbarian, but neither man could wait and the match was cancelled when they got into a fight backstage … Beat Johnny Blast to become the Undisputed West Virginia champion … Has an unbelievable hurracanrana for such a big man … Signature move is the facelift a fireman's carry into a stunner.

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251 VINNY MASSARO (5'9", 259, 6, 266) The powerful Sicilian is known for his unorthodox offense and his creativity in inventing new submission holds ... Calls himself "the Albert Einstein of wrestling" ... Massaro has been testing himself against international competition in Pro Wrestling Iron... Also competes for XPW, UPW, and several other independent promotions ... Main weakness is his conditioning, as he becomes visibly tired in matches that go longer than 20 minutes ... One of his best finishers is his sitdown tombstone piledriver he calls greetings from the pink poodle.

252 MIKE TAYLOR (5'10", 220, 1, NL) Talented rookie has moved from Ohio Valley Wrestling to the new Deep South developmental territory ... The move gave him an opportunity for a makeover ... Now known as "The Bounty Hunter," he has begun wearing face paint and wrestling a more aggressive style ... Clips out photos of his opponents and posts them in the corner before his matches to make sure he's about to put the hit on the right guy ... Spent four years in the Marine Corps before joining OVW.

253 ROD STEEL (6', 210, 5, 355) Florida competitor is not to be confused with OVW's Rod Steele ... Known as "The Miami Pound Machine" ... Steel is a former IPW heavyweight champion, IPW tag team champion, and IPW cruiserweight champion ... Now a part of Ron Niemi's nefarious 911 Incorporated ... Lost a brutal bloodbath against Steve Madison at Rage in the Cage 2005 ... Also has competed in CZW, NWA-Wildside, FIP, NWA-Spinebuster, and Combat Fusion ... Main finishing move is the South Beach slam and the long stoke (an inverted neckbreaker).

254 JADO (5'6", 198, 12, 245) New Japan junior heavyweight star is the regular partner of Gedo, and the duo is now affiliated with Masa Chono's CTU stable ... A former IWGP junior heavyweight champion ... Finished in last place in his block at this year's Best of the Super Junior Tournament ... Held the IWGP junior tag title with Gedo, but they lost the belts to the unlikely duo of Curry Man and American Dragon ... Had some excellent tag bouts this year against other New Japan regulars like Tiger Mask IV and Minoru Tanaka ... Formerly a key player in FMW's Team No Respect group ... Made a few appearances with ECW in the States a few years back.

255 MAC JOHNSON (6'1", 200, 3, 378) Lafayette, Louisiana, native moved to Louisville right out of high school and enrolled at the OVW Training School ... Last year, we wrote that Johnson was one of the more promising OVW youngsters who did not have a WWE developmental contract, but that was rectified when Johnson signed a developmental deal in February 2005 ... Formed a popular tag team with Seth Skyfire ... Idolized Curt Hennig as a boy and has tried to pattern himself after "Mr. Perfect."

256 TURBO (5'6", 169, 7, NL) Incredible high-flyer of the ENESMA promotion is reminiscent of a young Rey Misterio Jr. ... Colorful masked man has a race car driver outfit, complete with a helmet-like mask ... Protege of Lucha veteran Skayde ... His matches opposite Black Thunder have been the highlights of many LML cards ... Native of Mexico City ... One of the few Mexican wrestlers to ever appear with Ultimo Dragon's Toryumon X company ... A rising favorite among hardcore fans due to his daredevil antics ... Strings together armdrags and headscissors with blinding accuracy.

257 ALASTAIR "A-1" RALPHZ (6', 235, 3, NL) Don't bother with the steak sauce cracks—he's heard them all before ... Massive physical specimen got saddled with the "A-1" name when Disco Inferno misread his name (Al, short for Alastair Ralphs) as A-1 ... Often accompanied to the ring by the gorgeous Jade Chung ... Beat D-Lo Brown for the Border City Wrestling heavyweight title in December 2004 ... Entered TNA as part of Team Canada at the behest of Coach Scott D'Amore ... Formerly aligned with Johnny Swinger in BCW ... A graduate of the Can-Am Wrestling School ... Has appeared on both WWE *Velocity* and *Heat* ... "A-1" has been compared by some to a young Triple-H.

258 STRIKER (5'10", 225, 6, 323) Would the real Striker please stand up? ... Striker has a made a name for himself with his comedic impressions of veteran wrestlers like Randy Savage, The Legion of Doom, The Ultimate Warrior, and many others ... He didn't learn that from his trainer, Johnny Rodz ... A widely traveled competitor, Striker has competed in WWE, 3PW, Zero-One, USA Pro, and in England ... Though he likes to goof off with his promos, Striker is a formidable competitor and definite title threat, having held the NYWC heavyweight and tag belts and the CCW heavyweight title ... An accomplished tag team wrestler.

259 TAKASHI YOSHIDA (5'10", 235, 1, NL) Prize student of the Los Angeles Inoki Dojo made his pro debut at Toukon 7, losing to his trainer, Webster Dauphiney ... Honed his skills all over California in WPW, WAR, AWS, and other promotions ... Teamed with Angel in a double-dog collar match at the second SoCal Super Show against The Santino Brothers ... Finishing move is the Samurai Shote palm strike ... Made his debut for New Japan in a dark match against Slyck Wagner Brown ... A former arm-wrestling champion in Japan.

260 D-RAY 3000 (5'10", 180, 2, 310) D-Ray and his afro are conquering new worlds in 2005 ... First appeared in NWA-TNA where he scored a series of upsets wins over David Young ... Became a cult favorite and began teaming with Shark Boy ... Still seems confused most of the time, but at least he's winning a good portion of his matches ... Has also been busy wrestling in Border City Wrestling and Blue Water Championship Wrestling ... Tried to do a springboard move off the ropes as a tribute to Sabu at a December 2004 benefit show for Sabu and nearly killed himself ... Referee should check his hair for foreign objects.

251-270

261 MINORU FUJITA (5'9", 195, 8, 239) Freelance star has wrestled all over the world, including for the IWA in Puerto Rico, IWRG in Mexico, and for CZW and Jersey All Pro during a brief tour of the United States back in 2001 … Top star of Taka Michinoku's Kaientai Dojo group … Reformed his classic BattlArts tag team with Ikuto Hidaka—the two went all the way to the finals of this year's Differ Cup Tournament before losing to Naomichi Marufuji and KENTA … Sometimes appears with New Japan Pro Wrestling and Zero-One Max … Teamed with Shinya Makabe for most of his stay in Puerto Rico … Has great German and Dragon suplexes … Uses an unorthodox submission hold as his finisher, a reverse viper hold he calls boneyard.

262 BABI SLYMM (6'3", 285, 4, NL) The C.E.O. of Keep It Gangsta runs his own clothing company when he's not wrestling … Pinned Adam Pearce in a "AWS Idol" match to become the first ever AWS heavyweight champion … Both men actually sang to the audience before the match began … Also training at the New Japan Inoki Dojo … Has successfully defended the AWS belt against American Dragon, B-Boy, and others … Teamed with frequent rival Pearce to face "Diamond" Dallas Page and Mike "The Miz" Mizanin in UPW … Managed by C. Edward Vander Pyle … Trademark finisher is the Birdman slam.

263 THE AMAZING RED (5'6", 147, 4, 165) Once considered a huge part of the future of cruiserweight wrestling, Red has slowed down considerably since suffering a serious knee injury … Back in TNA, but not making the sort of impact he made there in the past … Compensates for his lack of size with some of the most innovative attacks in the sport … Incredibly resilient, Red is able to absorb an ungodly amount of punishment … Credited with being one of the men who originally popularized TNA's X division … If he's going to wrestle a more conservative style, he needs to bulk up and add a lot more muscle mass.

264 EL GRAN APOLO (6'4", 285, 9, 291) Apolo has been one of the most controversial wrestlers in Puerto Rico over the past few years … Was a dominant IWA champion until he finally dropped the title to Shane … Apolo made no bones about the fact that he was unhappy in the IWA and attempted to jump to the WWC in a blockbuster move … But just one day prior to his scheduled WWC debut, Apolo came to terms with the IWA and returned to the company … Has had several brief stints with TNA, during which he has often teamed with Sonny Siaki.

265 PRINCE NANA (5'11", 35, 9, 251) A legitimate prince from the Ashanti tribe of West Ghana, Africa … Has expanded his Embassy from the ECWA to Ring of Honor … Heaps abuse on his valet/slave girl, the beautiful Jade Chung … The Outkast Killas recently left the Embassy, sickened by Nana's treatment of Chung … Has also wrestled in dark matches for WWE and toured Japan with Zero-One … One of the best promo men anywhere in the sport … Previously held the ECWA Mid-Atlantic title … Teamed with Arch Kincaid in this year's ECWA Tag Team Summit.

266 MIKEY BATTS (5'7", 173, 2, NL) Frequently teams with Jerrelle Clark in TNA … Batts currently holds the NWA Florida X division championship and is a top contender to NWA junior heavyweight champion Jason Rumble's title … Also held the NWA Florida tag title with Clark … A cousin of Billy Kidman … Trained by Kidman and Roderick Strong … Primary finisher is his version of the code red, which he calls the Napoleon complex … Small in stature, Batts is known for his fighting spirit and perseverance.

267 PREDATOR (6'6", 307, 6, 161) This behemoth is currently splitting his time between wrestling for UPW and competing in the mixed martial arts group K-1 … Teams with Tom Howard in UPW … Former UPW heavyweight and Zero-One U.S. champion, as well as a 1993 NCAA champion … Originally moved from Pennsylvania to California in pursuit of an acting career … Resembles Bruiser Brody in both wild appearance and brawling style … Favorite moves include the spin doctor and the fisherman buster.

268 CHICANO (6'1", 220, 5, NL) One of the rising stars of the IWA, Chicano defeated Glamor Boy Shane to win the heavyweight championship in April … Suffered an ugly injury in January 2005, but zoomed back to the top, thanks in part to training from his mentor, Invader I … Previously teamed with Slash Venom, with whom he held the IWA tag title on two occasions … Also won the hardcore and IWA Intercontinental championships in the past year.

269 CHET JABLONSKI (6'1", 232, 5, NL) Trained by Les Thatcher, the Heartland Wrestling Association alumnus signed a WWE developmental contract in February 2005 … Previously teamed with his brother, Dean, as The A-Squad … A five-time HWA tag champion, Chet has held that title with his brother (twice), Derrick Neikirk (once), and Cody Hawk (twice) … Beat Matt Stryker for the HWA heavyweight title in 2002 … Also had a successful run in Puerto Rico's IWA that saw him win that tag title with Kasey James … His finisher is called "hit the showers," because that's the end of the match.

270 GRAN HAMADA (5'4", 190, 34, 275) Living legend of Lucha and *puroresu* is now wrestling through his fourth decade in the business … Sometimes teams with his daughter, *joshi* star Ayako Hamada … Junior heavyweight has outlasted all his contemporaries … Former star of New Japan, Universal, Michinoku Pro, and other promotions is now a regular with All-Japan Pro Wrestling … Years of a full-time schedule have started to slow down this high-flyer … Sometimes dons a mask as Mini Love Machine … Known for his windup headbutts … A decorated champion over the years, he helped popularize Lucha in Japan … Has one of the sport's best huracanranas.

PWI 500

271 WEBSTER DAUPHINEY (5'8", 184, 10, NL) "The Iceman" has one of the best mixed martial arts backgrounds in all of professional wrestling … A standout talent at the New Japan Inoki Dojo … Competed in Jungle Fights in Brazil and made his pro wrestling debut in a match against Vader for the WWF in 1995 … Previously known as John Black … Faced MMA fighter Kazuhiro Hamanaka for New Japan USA's Toukon Fight Spirit TV event … Has had memorable bouts against Kazarian and Rocky Romero.

272 ERIC MATLOCK (6', 195, 7, NL) Graduate of the Inoki Dojo in California lost to fellow graduate Puma in the first round of the 2005 Super 8 Tournament … Matlock has wrestled extensively for the World Wrestling Alliance in Japan, Korea, and The Eastern Islands … Combines vicious brawling tactics with solid technical skills … One of his favorite setups is the kidney punch—not flashy, but it's certainly effective … Has held tag titles in California's EWF, UWF, and IWC … Personal influences include Owen Hart, Dean Malenko, Elvis Presley, and Evel Knievel—which would explain the sideburns.

273 CHRIS HAMRICK (5'11", 210, 19, 256) "Confederate Currency" is a well-traveled journeyman and one of the most respected competitors on the indy circuit … Finishing moves are the top-rope legdrop and the always-dangerous top-rope piledriver … Competes throughout North Carolina and Tennessee … Usually teams with Tracey Smothers … He and Smothers lost to Dennis Condrey and Bobby Eaton in April 2005 … Feuded with Rodney Mack and Glenn Spectre … Was prominently featured in ECW and XPW in years past … Competed as Crimson Dragon in TNA.

274 BIGGIE BIGGS (6'5", 275, 11, 293) Native of East Brunswick, New Jersey, calls the IWF his home promotion … Biggs is the only wrestler to ever hold the IWF heavyweight, American, and tag team titles … Has wrestled all across the country … Trained by "Iron" Mike Sharpe … Moves quickly for a big man and has a vast technical arsenal … In other words, this big guy can hurt you in many ways … Says he loves rap music, his fans, and a good fight.

275 THE STRO (6'1", 250, 16, 292) Still best known for his stint in WCW as The Maestro, though he has also competed as Gorgeous George III and Robbie Eagle … Competes for dozens of indy promotions all over the U.S. … Trained by Nelson Royal, Ivan Koloff, and Gene Anderson … Currently a big fan favorite on the indy scene … Even managed to guest star on two episodes of the TV show *One Tree Hill* … Collects titles everywhere he goes … Has faced just about every big name in the business … Says "Nobody can go toe-to-toe with The Stro."

276 ERIC ALEXANDER (6'4", 250, 4, NL) Rose to prominence as part of the IWA's new generation of stars, but jumped to the WWC looking for better treatment … Joined The Starr Corporation upon signing with the WWC … Won the Puerto Rican title from Bronco during a lengthy feud … Was furious with WWC matchmakers after he was forced to defend that belt against a newcomer named Brian in his very first match in the company … Of course, Alexander lost that bout … Became a pawn in Carlito Caribbean Cool's war against his brother, Eddie Colon, by turning against his former friend (Eddie) to put himself in position for a shot at the universal title.

277 QUIET STORM (5'8", 180, 4, 226) This young New Yorker has returned from Japan after several extended tours with Michinoku Pro … His compact size and technical acumen are perfect for the Japanese style … Now competes almost exclusively in New York Wrestling Connection, but has competed in Ring of Honor, the ECWA, and several other New York area independents … His quiet, shy demeanor outside the ring doesn't prepare his opponents for his brutal intensity in the ring … Seemed to have a bright future just two short years ago, but he now seems to have stagnated.

278 SLYK WAGNER BROWN (6'2", 220, 7, 299) Brown scored the biggest win of his career when he defeated Christopher Daniels to win the 3PW heavyweight title in February 2005 … Ended up losing that title to Amish Roadkill in a three-way match that also involved Simon Diamond … Turned down an amateur wrestling scholarship to attend Killer Kowalski's pro wrestling school … Managed by April Hunter … In addition to his appreciation bomb (seated power bomb) finisher, Brown also uses his drop of xstacy (full-nelson seated slam) and Slyksault moonsault.

279 KEN ANDERSON (6'2", 225, 7, NL) "Kamikaze" Ken signed a WWE developmental contract in February 2005 and has been competing in Ohio Valley Wrestling … Has appeared on WWE television several times over the past five years, facing such stars as William Regal, Rosey, and Rodney Mack … A former ACW heavyweight, TV, and tag team champion … Recently aligned with Tank Toland in Tank's feud with Chris Cage … He's now part of the Blond Bombshell faction in OVW… Finisher is his big Kenton bomb.

280 STEVE MADISON (5'10", 224, 4, 339) Known as "The Modern Miracle" … Madison was the youngest NWA-Florida champion in the 70-year history of that title … Lost the NWA-Florida belt in a three-way match that saw Roderick Strong get pinned by Rod Steele, meaning he lost the title without ever being pinned or submitting … Has toured Asia, Europe, and Puerto Rico … Trained by Steve Keirn … Has made several WWE dark match appearances … Finishers are the brainbuster and axe bomber.

271-290

281 TOM HOWARD (6'4", 260, 11, 205) This veteran tough guy has whittled down his wrestling schedule to include just UPW in California … That's so he can focus on his MMA career in K-1 … This move isn't as crazy as it seems, since Howard has an extensive knowledge of shootfighting … He's well-versed in sambo, hwa rang do, freestyle wrestling, and Greco-Roman wrestling … A former UPW heavyweight and NWA Intercontinental tag champ … Has wrestled all over the world … A former WWE developmental wrestler.

282 THUNDER (5'10", 240, 5, NL) One-half of Thunder and Lightning, the most successful tandem in Puerto Rico over the past five years … The shorter—and more powerful—member of the masked team … Has been sidelined since suffering an injury in January … Thunder and Lightning have held the IWA tag title three times over the past year and are 10-time WWC tag champions … Can be considered The Road Warriors of the Puerto Rican wrestling scene and are clearly the team to beat in the IWA.

283 ARIK CANNON (5'8", 210, 4, 354) "The Anarchist" beat Petey Williams for the IWA Mid-South heavyweight title during the 2004 Ted Petty Invitational Tournament … In addition to Williams, Cannon has faced a "who's who" of independent superstars in the past year, including C.M. Punk, American Dragon, and Homicide … Would be ranked higher if not for several injuries in the past year, including a broken collarbone suffered against Austin Aries that kept him sidelined for four months and a torn plantar fascia and sprained ankle suffered in a TLC match against Joey Envy and Kory James that kept him out of the ring for a month … Finisher is the glimmering warlock, a shining enzuigiri.

284 ARCH KINCAID (6', 225, 6, 343) "The Intellectual" is the only wrestler who can boast a bachelor's degree in rhetoric, so of course he's a natural on the stick … Part of the ECWA-Chaotic talent exchange … Hosts a "Piper's Pit"-style interview segment in ECWA called "The World According To Arch" and "Kincaid's Compound" in Chaotic … Has feuded with Scotty Charisma, Cheetah Master, and Fred Sampson … Has made a few WWE appearances … Also competes in the IWF … With his promo skills, is a good bet to make it to WWE at some point.

285 KEVIN DUNN (5'10", 188, 5, NL) Teams with Marcos as The Ring Crew Express in Ring of Honor … Trained by H.C. Loc … Dunn is a standout singles competitor in NWA-Upstate, where he is known for his unbelievably stiff chops … Frequently uses his version of the Gory bomb and the burning hammer … Also gets great height on his elbowdrop from the top rope … Has held championship gold in Buffalo Championship Wrestling, Rochester Pro Wrestling, and NWA-Upstate … Lost the NWA-Upstate No Limits title to Petey Williams.

286 ONYX (5'9", 217, 5, 244) Onyx grabbed a record third NWA Wildside heavyweight title with a win over Rainman in April 2005 … Had a brief stint in TNA as part of Jeff Jarrett's Elite Guard along with Chad Collyer and Hotstuff Hernandez … Previously played football in the CFL … Has wrestled several WWE dark matches under the name Kyle McKinley … Pound-for-pound, he has one of the most stunning physiques in wrestling … Known to surprise opponents with a pristine dropkick … Calls his primary finisher the blaqout … Feuded with Ray Gordy.

287 MANA (6'4", 320, 4, 359) "The Polynesian Warrior" is in the midst of a long-running feud with Abyss that has seen many of their matches degenerate into brutality and bloodshed …. The fastest-ever graduate from the Wild Samoan Training Center has faced America's Most Wanted, Sandman, Mahoney, Crowbar, and other big names in the past year … Wrestles all over the Northeast … He's also had Mick Foley interfere in his matches and had gotten tips from Batista during his second reign as WXW heavyweight champion … The current champion of Connecticut Championship Wrestling.

288 NAPHTALI (5'11", 165, 8, 335) NWA-Florida competitor claims to come from Badstreet, U.S.A. … He couldn't have lived "in the last house on the right," unless he was roommates with The Freebirds … Choice of home town is an indication of Naphtali's old school preferences … Uses the Polish hammer, the Garvin stomp, and the heart punch to set up for his shining wizard finisher … Captured the NWA-FL X division title with a win over Sedrick Strong and O.G. Scarface in a TLC match … Follows C.M. Punk and the New Dawn to the ring in a wheelchair under the name Milo Beasley in Florida Impact Pro.

289 SCOTTY MAC (5'8", 205, 5, 300) Scotty Mac recently won the ECCW/NWA-PNW heavyweight title for a third time … Held the Portland Wrestling heavyweight and tag team titles simultaneously … Turned heel in February 2005 and began feuding with Juggernaut … Mac—once touted by the legendary grappler Len Denton as the future of the industry—has taken those words to heart and is more obnoxious than ever … Has formed an alliance with Machete Brown … Wrestled two matches in Ireland this year.

290 DANIEL PUDER (6'2", 230, 1, NL) Introduced to WWE fans as a contestant on *Tough Enough IV*, which he went on to win, earning a four-year, $1-million contract … Trained in kickboxing and mixed martial arts … Completely humiliated Kurt Angle by taking up Angle's challenge and almost snapping his arm with a key lock … Some people respected Puder for that, and others thought he was being unprofessional by trying to show up Angle … Chosen as the Best Kisser of all *TE* finalists by Mae Young … Destroyed Mike Mizanin in a boxing match at Armageddon 2004 … Got the stuffing kicked out of him at the 2005 Royal Rumble but—*hey*—they can't take away the contract!

PWI 500

291 HUMAN TORNADO (6'3", 180, 2, NL) Lanky competitor is extremely charismatic and energetic … A former Los Angeles light heavyweight champion, Tornado lost that title to Quicksilver … Unmasked AWS heavyweight champion Masked Spymaster II, revealing the masked man to be Adam Pearce … Once hit a "slam dunk huracanrana" in a match held in a gymnasium by dunking a basketball at the top of a standing huracanrana on Topgun Talwar … Known for his low-blow resistant, "Pimp Of The Year" grapefruits.

292 JUGGERNAUT (6'4", 395, 8, 307) Proved his name wasn't a joke as he went undefeated throughout 2004 … Juggernaut holds 1st degree Black Belts in Kodokan Judo and Japanese Jujutsu … Won his sixth ECCW/NWA-Pacific Northwest heavyweight title by beating Scotty Mac … Was scheduled to face Matt Borne in August with Mick Foley as guest referee … Sometimes managed by Princess Lily … Is scheduled to tour India, Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei this fall … Also won the TFW North American title and the TFW tag title with The Wrenner … Finishers are the K-drill and the gadzooga.

293 RAY GORDY (5'11", 218, 4, 345) The son of Terry "Bamm Bamm" Gordy is being closely watched by WWE talent scouts … Made a few appearances in Ring of Honor and impressed the discerning ROH fans … Has also competed in Pro Wrestling NOAH and the now-defunct NWA Wildside … Known as "The Pearl Of The Enterprise," which just doesn't role off the tongue as easily as "Bamm Bamm" … Main finisher is the German suplex, but Gordy also has an impressive swanton bomb in his arsenal … Has feuded with Onyx and Rainman.

294 SETH SHAI (6', 225, 6, 361) The man who set records for number of championships won throughout Texas and the Southwest independents added another belt to his resume when he beat Lenny Lane for the NAWA heavyweight title … Credits Bret Hart, Rick Martel, and Ivory as his primary influences … Known as "The Darko Pantha" … Usually uses either the sharpshooter or his Pantha clutch to put away opponents … Has recently begun teaming with Mace, a partnership that has yielded them the UWF tag title.

295 VORDELL WALKER (6', 235, 3, NL) "The Shooter" has wrestled extensively throughout the Southeast for NWA-Florida, SCW, Combat Fusion, and FIP, and recently debuted in Ring of Honor … Was taken under the wing of "The Black Nature Boy" Scoot Andrews before Andrews' retirement … Recently faced FIP champion Homicide in a non-title match … Has appeared on NWA-TNA *Impact* and *Xplosion* … Wins matches with his vortex swinging uranage and 450 splash.

296 STEVE DeMARCO (6'1", 230, 5, 387) "Sexy" Steve has held every title in PCW and is the reigning PCW heavyweight champion … Suffered a severe knee injury going into PCW's big Triplexmas card and lost the TV title to Brett Barnes … Still managed to win the tournament to crown a heavyweight champion just one week later, beating three men despite wrestling with strained ligaments in his knee … Feuding with Shadow and his dastardly minions, Tim Storm, Apocalypse, and Damien.

297 BRAD BRADLEY (6'4", 248, 4, 246) Illinois native has found a home in IWA Mid-South … Finishing move is the lariat, which ranks among the most dangerous in the sport … Trained at the Steel Dominion Wrestling school … Has appeared on NWA-TNA *Xplosion* and has wrestled for New Japan USA … Teamed with Ryan Boz to win the IWA Mid-South tag titles … Bradley and Boz have managed to beat such teams as Petey Williams and Alex Shelley and The Thomaselli Brothers … Also teams with Trik Davis … Has been extensively scouted by New Japan.

298 ALEX ARION (5'7", 205, 7, 261) "The Golden Greek" has been competing in New England Championship Wrestling, NWA-New England, and Green Mountain Wrestling … Also has appeared in Ring of Honor and competed in the 2003 Super 8 tournament … Main finishing move is his reverse double jump bodypress … Has competed in WWE dark matches … Short stature often causes larger opponents to take him lightly, which usually ends up being a mistake.

299 JOEL MAXIMO (5'9", 200, 4, 195) The Spanish Announce Team is still one of the most in-demand teams on the independent circuit, but they have lost some of their luster over the past year, dropping more than 100 spots in the "500" … Still uses the beach break, a belly-to-back piledriver, as well as dozens of double-team moves along with his brother, Jose … Appeared on *Velocity* in May, losing a handicap match to The Big Show and a tag against The Basham Brothers … Main finishing move is the impressive Spanish fly.

300 TEDDY HART (6'1", 195, 5, 249) Hart continues to create controversy everywhere he goes, and even where he doesn't go … Recently no-showed appearances in JAPW and in Buffalo due to problems at the U.S. border … Nephew of Bret Hart and grandson of Stu is known for his daredevil high-flying moves … When Teddy is on his game, he's one of the most exciting young competitors in the world, but he has come to redefine the term "loose cannon" … Claims to be the "past, present, and future of professional wrestling."

291-310

301 BOOMER PAYNE (6', 247, 10, 318) Pittsburgh native has cracked the "500" every year since 1997 ... Won his second APW heavyweight title from Manchild in October 2004, but dropped the belt two months later ... Underwent knee surgery but was back in the ring just 30 days later ... Received the All Pro Wrestling Most Popular Wrestler of 2004 Award and the Comeback of the Year Award ... Takes credit for forcing Mad Mike into retirement in NWA East ... Has scored several wins over Chris Hamrick in recent months ... Finishing maneuver is the dishonorable discharge.

302 KIRBY MARCOS (5'5", 152, 5, NL) The wrestler best known as Mean Marcos has let the cat out of the bag and claims his first name is Kirby ... Not since Cosmo Kramer have we been so surprised ... Best known for being one-half of The Ring Crew Express with Kevin Dunn ... The fans get a kick out of Dunn and Marcos' clueless hair metal fan shtick and impromptu air guitar jams ... Feuded with Special K, The Carnage Crew, and The Olsen Twins ... Finisher is the Unskinny Bop ... Greatest moment of the past year was winning a scramble cage match at ROH's third anniversary card.

303 TIM WARCLOUD (6'1", 235, 10, NL) Warcloud started off 2005 with a two-month tour of England through All Star Promotions ... Teams with Tejas as Tribal Force ... Made his film debut playing himself in the upcoming film *Mil Mascaras Vs. The Aztec Mummy* ... Served as stunt coordinator for the movie and filmed matches against Mascaras and El Hijo Del Santo ... Finishing moves are the tomahawk chop and the Indian deathlock, of course ... Warcloud is a Powhattan and Cherokee Indian ... Trained at the Harley Race Academy.

304 JOSE MAXIMO (5'9", 190, 4, 197) One-half of The Spanish Announce Team with brother Joel ... The brothers recently packed up and moved to Louisville to begin training at the OVW Training School ... Their nonstop, move-a-second style doesn't gel with the current WWE style, and the brothers have struggled in recent months ... Pet move is his skull driver ... The S.A.T. wrestled several WWE dark matches this spring and have appeared on *Velocity* ... Have also competed in ROH, TNA, the ECWA, NYWC, and NWA Wildside.

305 APOCALYPSE (6'2", 210, 5, NL) The man from Parts Unknown competes in the Texas-based Professional Championship Wrestling promotion ... He and partner Tim Storm have held the PCW tag team championship ... Also competes in the Christian Wrestling Federation ... Regardless of his tactics in the ring, he always makes time for the fans after the show ... Has feuded with The Angel and The Saint in battles of Biblical proportions.

306 TOMMY WILLIAMS (5'9", 193, 4, NL) Formerly known as Funky Billy Kim of The X-Foundation, Williams has come into his own since joining the New Japan Inoki Dojo ... His first appearance in Japan was cut short as he suffered a severe elbow injury in the first round of the New Japan Young Lions tournament ... Has vowed to return to Japan as soon as possible ... Took on Kurt Angle as part of the Angle challenge in Hollywood ... Frequently compared to a young Rick Steamboat because of his look and competitive fire.

307 KEN DOANE (6'4", 250, 4, NL) One of the youngest wrestlers that people are talking about down in OVW ... Began wrestling at age 15 and was trained in part by Killer Kowalski ... Beat Deuce Shade for the OVW TV title in June 2005 ... Signed a WWE developmental contract last year immediately after graduating from high school ... Some people say the sky is the limit for the soft-spoken wrestling prodigy ... Feuded with Shade and with M-N-M ... Calls his finisher the Doane-ation.

308 FRANK MURDOCH (6'1", 285, 17, 344) This Gooding, Idaho, native originally trained under "Mad Dog" Buzz Sawyer ... Has a very rough, no-nonsense demeanor ... His objective is simple: Get in the ring, win, drink a beer, and then go home ... He's not all talk, either, as he is a former amateur wrestling champ and a standout in football ... That explains how his wicked arsenal of suplexes and clotheslines easily hurts his opponents ... Calls Pro Wrestling Iron his home ... Has held the APW universal title.

309 DA BEAST (6'6", 270, 2, 332) The powerful former shootfighter signed a WWE developmental contract in June 2005 ... Went to 35-7 overall in his shoot-fighting career, which isn't too shabby ... Also an experienced amateur boxer with a 57-26 record ... Has been competing in Ohio Valley Wrestling for the past year ... Briefly teamed with Carlito in OVW and could make a good bodyguard for the reigning I-C champion ... His college basketball team won the NJCAA title in 1999-2000 and he was in the top 20 in the nation in rebounding ... Calls his finishing move "Mr. Toad's magical soup."

310 MIKE FOXX (6'3", 255, 5, NL) Known as "Main Event" ... Was the main member of the International Playaz Club in PCW ... A three-time former PCW heavyweight champion ... Won PCW's first-ever "fight, win, survive" match against Action Jackson ... Scored a big win over Sabu ... Took a sabbatical from the ring but returned at PCW's Genocide 2005 card, attacking Mace Malone with a tire iron in a heinous assault.

PWI 500

311 STERLING JAMES KEENAN (6'1", 204, 5, 395) Calls himself "The Present And Future Of Pittsburgh Wrestling" ... Has also had breakout matches in 3PW and the IWC ... Challenged Austin Aries for the Ring of Honor heavyweight title in April 2005 in a match held in Far North Wrestling ... Keenan has also had notable matches against Dennis Gregory and Claudio Castagnoli ... Defended the IWC heavyweight title against C.M. Punk in front of more than 1,000 fans last year.

312 MARTY WRIGHT (6'2", 240, 1, NL) *Tough Enough IV* and was eliminated for lying about his age ... Is really about 40 years old, but he's an incredible shape regardless ... Went to OVW where he was known as "Liar" ... Showed a natural flair and was extremely good on promos, so he was offered a WWE developmental contract ... At press time, was just appearing on WWE TV as The Boogey Man ... It seems like a bizarre gimmick, but Wright may just be the man to make it work.

313 ROB ECKOS (5'10", 195, 6, 336) Considers himself to be the brains of The Valedictorians, but that's certainly up for debate ... Eckos and partner Billy Bax have held the ECWA tag title for more than 18 months so far ... Managed by the diminutive Carlton P. Hightower ... Has also held the Chaotic Wrestling tag belts with Bax ... Has competed in several WWE dark matches, as well as in a televised loss to Matt Morgan in May 2005 ... Also wrestles for 3PW and the NYWC ... Somehow emerged unscathed from a frightening fall from a 14-foot platform in a wild TLC match last spring ... Has added about 15 pounds of muscle since last year.

314 JASON RUMBLE (5'9", 201, 7, 281) This "Boston Bad Boy" still follows the advice his mentor, Tony Rumble, passed on to him before he died ... Bounced back from an injured ACL to regain the NWA junior heavyweight title, starting his third reign ... He defeated Jerrelle Clark and Vance Desmond in a three-way match on October 17 in Winnipeg to win the title ... Wrestles primarily in New England, but he has appeared in TNA as well as in several other NWA affiliates.

315 DUSTY WOLFE (5'11", 235, 22, 320) A well-traveled journeyman who has survived a rough career on the road ... Toured all over the world, often working shows at U.S. military bases to entertain the troops ... Also wrestles in Mexico regularly, as well as the Texas independents ... Has held titles in almost every promotion for which he has wrestled ... Uses his tenacious, roughhouse style to wear down opponents ... Still a threat to any budding superstar since he could easily defeat just about anyone if he really tried.

316 ADAM FIRESTORM (5'10", 199, 9, 325) The Auckland, New Zealand, native has added a number of submission holds to his repertoire ... The most effective new move is his Russian deathlock, a side Russian leg sweep turned into a head-and-arm submission lock ... Attends film school when not wrestling and has begun bringing a small camera to the ring to scout future opponents ... Usually, though, he just films opponents after they have been defeated to taunt them ... Now based in Calgary and recently debuted for the Prairie Wrestling Alliance.

317 QUINN MAGNUM (6'5", 271, 9, 338) Continues to be a popular attraction in Pittsburgh, West Virginia, and Ohio ... A former NWA-North American champion ... Based out of the NWA-PWX ... Has the distinction of being one of only two men ever to hold every title in NWA-PWX ... Served as part of the "Old Guard" in the war against the Youth Movement that consumed the promotion ... Magnum led the veterans in a winning effort against the upstarts ... Has been locked in a personal feud with Scott Venom since Venom snagged a spot on the PWX championship committee ... Searching for his third title reign in NWA-PWX ... Finisher is the .44 Magnum.

318 CRU JONES (6'1", 240, 5, NL) "The All-Star" is wrestling all over the Midwest and has appeared in IWA Mid-South, NWA-Wildside, and dozens of other promotions ... Won the NWA-Revolution heavyweight championship ... Last cracked the "*PWI* 500" back in 2003 ... Calls his finishing move the monster blitz ... A native of Chicago ... Cru is a natural athlete with a strong work ethic and great power.

319 BRIAN BLACK (6'4", 260, 5, NL) Signed a WWE developmental contract in March 2005 ... Currently stationed in Ohio Valley Wrestling ... Trained by Mike Hollow and Killer Kowalski ... Finishing move is the blackout ... Won a 28-man battle royal to win the Chaotic Wrestling New England championship in April 2004 ... Teamed with Mighty Mini to win the Chaotic tag team title on two occasions.

320 ANDREW RYKER (6', 200, 4, NL) ECWA mainstay was impressive in the first round of the 2005 Super 8 Tournament, losing to Alex Shelley ... Trained at Bonebreakers in Maryland ... Ryker is a two-time MEWF cruiserweight champion and 5 Star Wrestling heavyweight champion ... Earned a spot in the Super 8 by scoring wins over Low-Ki and Mike Kruel ... Has wrestled a handful of WWE dark matches and appeared in a few WWE backstage vignettes ... Lists his goals as aspiring for respect and being a good son, good friend, and good father to his dogs and other pets ... Finishers include the Ryker rewind and firebird splash.

311-330

321 RICO SUAVE (5'10", 255, 21, NL) The son of former Conquistador and WWF veteran Jose Estrada … Had a career-changing year after his mentor, Bronco, convinced him he had to go back and retrain … Faced Rosario for the Puerto Rican title and then snapped after losing the bout, savagely attacking Rosario … Perennially underrated star has made it his goal to capture the WWC universal title … Known for his crisp, fluid execution, as well as his formidable promo skills … No Gerardo cracks, please.

322 MICHELLE STARR (6'2", 275, 18, NL) Canadian veteran is known for his flamboyant tights and effeminate ways … Teamed with "Loverboy" Johnny Canuck as The Glamour Order of Discipline in Extreme Canadian Championship Wrestling … Think Billy and Chuck, but with far worse fashion sense … Got his start in wrestling working ring crew for the WWF in the mid-1980s … Trained under Billy Anderson in California and then started taking bookings in Mexico … An old school performer who competes throughout Canada.

323 ROBIN KNIGHTWING (5'8", 222, 5, 366) "The Sexy Monkey" made the biggest move of his career, leaving his hometown of Niagara Falls and moving to Louisville to train at the OVW training center … Part of The All-Knighters along with Joey Knight and Kevin Grace … The All-Knighters use a stack suplex/superplex finisher they call the Knight rider … Always clowning around and making the fans (and sometimes his opponents) crack up laughing … Nearly beat Jonny Puma for the Empire State Wrestling heavyweight title in October 2004 … Had a brief cameo in the *Dukes of Hazzard* movie … Has toured Europe on several occasions.

324 J.J. PEREZ (5'6", 170, 6, 431) Perez learned to overcome his diminutive size by mastering the technical aspect of the game … Often targets opponents' knees to take them off their feet and negate height disadvantages … Trained by Michael Modest and Donovan Morgan … Has competed throughout California and has wrestled for Osaka Pro Wrestling and Hokuto Pro Wrestling in Japan … Finisher is the third eclipse … Beat Tyson Dux in the opening round of the 2005 Super 8 Tournament … Lost to Puma in the semifinals … A former APW Internet champion.

325 DENNIS GREGORY (6'1", 222, 13, 306) Pennsylvania veteran is on a leave of absence as he is currently serving with the U.S. Air Force Reserves and is stationed in Kuwait … Has wrestled in memorable matches against Sterling James Keenan, Jimmy Vegas, Dirk Ciglar, and Powerhouse Hughes … A former PGH Pro heavyweight champion, CWF heavyweight and tag champion, and SCW champion … Still managed by longtime advisor "Hot Shot" Drew Lozario … Calls himself an "Independent Legend."

326 N8 MATTSON (5'10", 198, 9, NL) Mattson has wrestled in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia … Made two appearances on NWA-TNA *Xplosion* … Currently holds the Border City Wrestling tag team title with Danny Daniels … Trained by Scott D'Amore, "Irish" Mickey Doyle, and "Canadian Destroyer" Doug Chevalier … Excels on the mat but can also take to the air with the best of them … Finisher is the M-80 swinging neck bomb.

327 FRED SAMPSON (6'2", 250, 3, 390) "The Bonecrusher" has had a busy year, competing throughout the Northeast and finding time to be one of Kurt Angle's personal security guards for some of the Angle Challenge segments … He's the guy who guards the Olympic gold medals … Held the ECWA Mid-Atlantic heavyweight title for two months in late-2004 … Also held the IWF heavyweight title … Finisher is the Bonecrusher slam, a running powerslam … Also works for Chaotic Wrestling, Continental Championship Wrestling, NWS, WXW, SSCW, and ACWA … Upper body strength belies an impressive vertical leap.

328 STEVE MACK (5'9", 275, 8, 315) Feuded with C.J. O'Doyle for five months in 3PW, giving the promotion some of the hardest-hitting matches it has ever seen … Mack has been teaming with Damian Adams as The Kings of Philly … They are perennial top contenders for the 3PW tag belts, but always seem to get a raw deal … Became the first IEW (New Jersey) heavyweight champion … Formerly a member of Da Hit Squad … Now teams with Mark Clemson … Wrestles for 3PW, JAPW, WXW, and several other promotions.

329 EL NENE (5'10", 260, 8, NL) Known as "The Puerto Rican Superman," El Nene is a police officer in his out-of-the-ring life … A former WWC universal champion … Currently competing in the independent NWS, in which he is the top contender to the heavyweight title … Once faced—and beat—five wrestlers at the same time … Considered to be the strongest indy wrestler in Puerto Rico.

330 CHASYN RANCE (5'9", 182, 12, 392) Rance spent all of last summer competing in Stampede Wrestling alongside the ever-controversial Teddy Hart … Bills himself as the last student of The Hart Foundation and the last person to win a shootfight at the famous Hart family Dungeon before the house was sold … Beat Ashe Samuels in the first wrestling match to be held inside an eight-sided ring in Calgary … Currently holds a half-dozen singles championships and competes from New Jersey to Florida and throughout the Midwest … Signature move is the sensational spike, a variation of the emerald erosion and his incredible Chasyn driver (a piledriver through the ropes) … Occasionally accompanied by "So Cal Val" Valerie Wyndham.

PWI 500

331 CLAUDIO CASTAGNOLI (6'4", 238, 4, NL) Native of Lucerne, Switzerland, has relocated to the U.S. and competes for CHIKARA, CZW, IWA Mid-South, and ROH … Won the 32-team Tag World Grand Prix with partner Arik Cannon, thanks to help from Chris Hero … Master of the European uppercut, Castagnoli claims to know more than a dozen variations of that basic strike … Snobby aristocrat often wrestles while wearing his necktie … A former WXW (Germany) heavyweight champion … Finishes opponents with his cross-arm pyramid bomb.

332 DANNY DORING (5'11", 212, 6, 294) "The Danaconda" is hoping to work his way up through the WWE developmental system and make a return to the national stage … Was involved a brief vignette at One Night Stand, but due to technical difficulties, we might never know what Doring said … Has been competing all over the indy circuit, including a solid run as NWA Upstate heavyweight champion … Graduated from the ECW House of Hardcore, at which he was trained by Perry Saturn and Tazz.

333 SEDRICK STRONG (6'2", 200, 4, 321) Brother and tag team partner of Roderick Strong … Teams with Roderick in several Florida independents … Has held several Florida area titles, including the IPW tag team, NWA Florida X division, and the Christian Wrestling Federation cruiserweight titles … Quietly impressive, but could use more exposure in promotions outside Florida … Competed in the 2003 Super 8 Tournament and has experience in TNA … Uses the super diamond dust as his finisher.

334 JOEY KNIGHT (5'8", 201, 5, 372) Part of The All-Knighters with Robin Knightwing and Kevin Grace … Moved to Louisville to train at the OVW school … Held the Neo Spirit Pro Wrestling tag title with Knightwing, with Knight scoring the title-winning pinfall over Team Canada's Eric Young … Goofy ring entrances and pantomimed swimming act on the turnbuckles are classic Joey … Known as "The Joeverine" … Has teamed with Romeo Roselli, Deuce Shade, Steve Lewington, and Elijah Burke in OVW … Has a cameo in the *Dukes Of Hazzard* movie.

335 LADIES' CHOICE (6', 220, 6, NL) Ladies' Choice will be the first man to tell you how nice it is to get comfy on the love seat with a glass of Courvoisier and a fine honey by your side … Competes in Pro Wrestling Canada, but claims to hail from the Sunset Strip in California … Claims he has properties on every continent … Emulates Ric Flair from the ornate ring robes to the stylin' and profilin' … May seem more concerned with the women at ringside than his opponent, but it's a bad idea to take him lightly.

336 RORY FOX (5'10", 220, 6, 434) Got his first national exposure by being featured in a MTV special on aspiring wrestlers … Trained by Les Thatcher … Fox has held the Heartland heavyweight, tag team, cruiserweight, and TV championships … Fox has also competed in WWE, OVW, WCW, and several other indy promotions … Has feuded with Shark Boy, Chad Collyer, Nigel McGuinness, and Cody Hawk … Finishers are the full-nelson slam and his Fox trap, an inverted stump puller … Lost to Petey Williams in the opening round of the 2005 Super 8 Tournament … Uses a mat-based style that best utilizes his low center of gravity.

337 VIK DALISHUS (6'1", 220, 4, NL) World of Hurt competitor claims he got tough by growing up in the Amish country of Intercourse, Pennsylvania … Also toughened up because he was "the seventh son of a seventh son," meaning he had cousins and brothers waiting in line to beat on him … All those beatings haven't humbled him a bit though … "Guys, do me a favor—keep your women on a leash until after my match," reads his warning on his personal Web site … Has competed in OVW over the past two years and previously competed in World of Hurt Wrestling.

338 BILLY BAX (5'10", 205, 5, 422) The powerhouse of The Valedictorians … Has held the ECWA tag title with Rob Eckos for more than 18 months now … Frequently appears in preliminary matches for both Raw and Smackdown … Bax seems to be the highly suggestible type, often falling into lockstep with whatever harebrained scheme Eckos and manager Carlton P. Hightower devise … After each successful title defense, he and Eckos jubilantly move the tassels on their mortar boards from one side to the other, signifying another test passed … Has feuded with Fred Sampson, The O.C. Boyz, and The Logan Brothers.

339 LIGHTNING (6'4", 240, 5, NL) The larger member of Thunder and Lightning, the most dominant tag team in Puerto Rico … Lightning is a former WWC universal champion, but he has been in something of a holding pattern ever since Thunder went down with an injury back in January … Thunder and Lightning have held the IWA tag title three times over the past year and are 10-time WWC tag champions … The team has a great look and the sort of chemistry that is extremely rare in stateside tag teams these days.

340 VITO THOMASELLI (5'10", 185, 4, 384) "Airborne" possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of amateur wrestling holds and maneuvers … Often teams with brother Sal as The Iron Saints, but has previously had success teaming with Low-Ki, Jay Jensen, Eric Marks, and Brandon Bishop … Mainly wrestles for Pro Wrestling Iron in California, but also competes in IWA Mid-South, Pro Wrestling Guerrilla, and the WWA in Chicago … McHenry, Illinois, native was trained by Mike Modest, Donovan Morgan, and Rick Thompson … Finishers include the Sicilian driver, psycho driver, and the Molotov piledriver … Has several different valets (Apryl, Jade, and Crystal) depending on where he is wrestling at the time.

331-350

341 SCOTTY CHARISMA (6', 205, 4, NL) The reigning ECWA heavyweight champion won the NBI Natural Bodybuilding Contest in March 2005 … Won the ECWA title in a wild five-way match against John Walters, Xavier, Mike Kruel, and Andrew Ryker … A fantastic physical specimen with a lean, chiseled look and impressive stamina … Has successfully defended the belt against Kodiak Bear and Arch Kincaid … Appeared on *Smackdown* as part of the Kurt Angle challenge, but didn't fare particularly well that night … Also competes for Chaotic Wrestling, CCW, ECPW, NWA Universal, and NWA Oklahoma.

342 ZACH GOWEN (5'11", 155, 3, 228) The 2003 *PWI* Rookie of the Year may have let his early success in WWE go to his head … Lost a leg to cancer as a young boy … His ability to compete on one leg, and to execute dropkicks and his split-legged moonsault is simply remarkable … Has been competing on the indy circuit, often against The Insane Clown Posse … Recently returned to TNA (in which he previously competed as Tenacious Z) and hopes to make an impact in the X division … Will probably always have detractors who say he's nothing more than a sideshow attraction.

343 NASDAQ (6', 252, 6, NL) One-half of The Market Crashers with Dow Jones … The Market Crashers have been a dominant force on the Florida independent scene, as well as in Puerto Rico … Currently holds the MXPW, CCW, and Sunray Pro Wrestling tag titles … The Market Crashers have had memorable feuds with The Shane Twins, The Heavenly Bodies, The Natural Disasters, The Bushwhackers, and Thunder and Lightning … NASDAQ recently tried his hand as a singles competitor, beating Ryan O'Reilly for the MXPW TV title … The team recently invaded NWA Florida … They call their finisher the black Monday.

344 HANGMAN HUGHES (6'6", 280, 3, NL) Called "Hangman" for his penchant for using a rope to try to choke the life out of his opponents … The massive Canadian regularly competes in Puerto Rico's IWA, in which he has become a destructive juggernaut … Won the IWA hardcore title, but lost it to the chair-swinging Ricky Banderas … Feuded with Shane over the IWA heavyweight title, but was unable to score a decisive win over his fellow Canadian … A dangerous man who should be able to beat most opponents on sheer size alone, without having to resort to underhanded tactics … He's either a sadist or lazy.

345 MACE (6', 255, 7, NL) MACE and tag team partner ACE (Larry Green) defended the ACW TX tag title against Skandor Akbar's latest version of Devastation Inc., Blake the Brawler and Robert Evans … Defeated two-time NWA-Texas light heavyweight champion Cyclone … Formed The Re-Gex with Tejas and accepted Seth Shai as a new member … Teamed with Shai to win the UWF tag belts … Competes throughout Texas and the Southwest … Has faced "Dr. Death" Steve Williams, Spanky, and Rodney Mack … Managed by Chris Idol in the CWF.

346 AXL ROTTEN (6'2", 302, 18, NL) The hardcore veteran has ventured out of his home base of IWA Mid-South to make a bunch of WWE appearances over the past few months … Usually teams with Mahoney … Feud with his brother, Ian, was voted 1995's hottest by *PWI* readers … Main finisher is the S.S.T., or the severe skull trauma … Can deliver some great, explosive offense, but tends to get winded after just a few minutes, so tag team wrestling is probably the way to go for him at this stage of his career.

347 DOW JONES (6'3", 335, 6, NL) A bull investment if independent tag teams are your main investment portfolio … The larger, more powerful member of The Market Crashers … The Crashers recently beat The Vandalz to become two-time Sunray Pro Wrestling tag champions … They have dominated that promotion for the past two years, ever since they created their heel faction, The Firm … Experienced tag team has faced some of the best tandems in Puerto Rico, as well as on the indy circuit … Beat Phi Delta Slam for the Coastal Championship Wrestling tag team belts in 2004 … They call their finisher the black Monday.

348 ROBBIE DAWBER (6'1", 210, 7, NL) Popular Ohio Valley Wrestling competitor has shown some flashes of brilliance as one of the promotion's young lions … Suffered several losses in opening matches, but has been learning from his mistakes and looks to be poised for a breakthrough in the near future … He might just live up to his nickname as "The New Thing" … Recently changed his image and sheared off his long hair … Seems to be a natural on the mike.

349 BRUCE STEELE (6'4", 260, 6, 383) Steele is a member of the hated 911 Incorporated in NWA-Florida, along with Rod Steel, Buck Quartermain, and manager "Hardcore Giant" Ron Niemi … The current NWA-Florida heavyweight champion, Steele won the strap in a three-way dance, beating Steve Madison and Roderick Strong … Successfully defended the NWA-Florida title against Jerry Lawler in front of more than 3,000 fans … Has appeared on several editions of NWA-TNA *Impact* and once appeared on *Smackdown* … Beat James Hendrix in a violent cage match at Rage in the Cage 2005.

350 SAL THOMASELLI (5'9", 190, 2, 403) The other half of The Iron Saints, in which he teams with brother Vito … They are currently feuding with another brother, Brandon, in IWA Mid-South … Currently holds the IWA Mid-South tag title with Vito … The duo also wrestle in Pro Wrestling Iron … Fares much better in tag matches than he does in singles competition … Named Supreme Pro Wrestling's 2002 Rookie of the Year … As talented as his brother in the ring, but could use some more seasoning.

PWI 500

351 HENTAI (5'5", 170, 7, 370) Changed his name from Super Hentai to simply HENTAI after feigning a retirement, only to align with the evil Sebastian Dark … This came after a violent feud with Dark in which HENTAI was blinded with an alcohol mixture … Since becoming a heel, HENTAI has attacked Mick Foley and IWC promoter Norm Connors … Teamed with Dark to beat Bobby Eaton and Dennis Condrey for the IWC tag title … Regarded as the best Super Indy champion in IWC history … Once considered a mentor and idol, HENTAI now finds himself shunned in the IWC locker room.

352 BAMM BAMM PENDERS (6'1", 235, 2, NL) OVW's resident frat boy has been all about drinking, partying, and peeping into sorority house windows … Adopted the "Bamm Bamm" nickname as a tribute to Terry Gordy, though he's also a fan of Bam Bam Bigelow … Claims to hold the Kappa Sigma Kegstand record at 66 seconds … Transferred to the University of Louisville for a chance to train at the OVW training school.

353 K.C. THUNDER (6', 265, 16, 373) The crafty veteran competes in Iron Ring Wrestling, Palmetto Pride Wrestling, and throughout the Southeast … Currently managed by the lovely Dawn Rene … Uses the figure-four leglock to win his matches … Currently feuding with Dave Renegade in Palmetto Pride … Adopted the nickname "The Tennessee Stud" after beating Ron Fuller in 2003 … Trained by master wrestling technician Nelson Royal.

354 E.C. NEGRO (6'3", 230, 3, 414) E.C. Negro continues to improve and climb higher in the ratings as a singles competitor after being a tag team specialist … Beat Slyck Wagner Brown for the JCW heavyweight title and feuded with Jay Lethal in the AWA … Beat Boogalou for the WXW TV title … Fought Homicide to a draw, which has to be considered a moral victory … Signature moves include the brolic buffalo legdrop, the cobra clutch bomb, and the exploder suplex … Wrestled Chris Candido at ECW Arena this year, a personal thrill … Also made his debut in ROH … Managed by K.C. Blade, his former tag team partner.

355 MIKE TOBIN (6', 185, 6, NL) The cocky Tobin is one-third of The Chick Magnets with Mozart Fontaine and Brian Soscia in the East Coast Wrestling Association … That deceptively named team is managed by Carlton P. Hightower … The trio is known for flirting with the ladies at ringside, and getting offended when the women reject them in repulsion … To be fair, Tobin probably has the best build of the three … A good technical wrestler with strong aerial skills, Tobin just prefers to take shortcuts … The Chick Magnets have feuded with The Logan Brothers and The O.C. Boyz.

356 AARON IDOL (6', 213, 4, NL) Idol has been making a name for himself on the West Coast and north of the border … Won the 2005 ECCW Pacific Cup tournament, scoring wins over Memphis Raines, J.J. Perez, Puma, and American Dragon … Won the TRW cruiserweight title in November 2004 … Also scored a win over Jack Evans last summer … Frequently teams with "Sweet Daddy" Robin Logan … He and Logan have been feuding with Models Inc. over the ECCW tag belts … Like all good Canadians, considered the sharpshooter to be one of his favorite finishers, along with the enzuigiri and top rope backdrop.

357 ALYX WINTERS (5'11", 226, 5, NL) "The Cold" beat Ray Idol to win the Championship Wrestling national title in January 2005 … Has recently begun feuding with Dr. Tom Prichard, the man who beat him for that belt in April … Was trained by E.Z. Money for his pro debut … Faced Money in his very first match … Usually wrestles in northeast Tennessee and West Virginia … Occasionally teams with Rick Morton … Likes to put opponents away with his standing shooting star press.

358 MARC ASH (6'1", 220, 16, 337) Veteran competitor has worked all over the country and faced everyone from Ivan Koloff to Viscera … Based out of the Carolinas, Ash has held the ICW heavyweight title 10 times … Recently underwent surgery for a bulging disc … Released a CD called *Ashkicker*, featuring the single "Wrestling's My Game" … Maybe he should hook up with Kenny Casanova for a duet … Trained by Chief Jay Eagle and Nelson Royal.

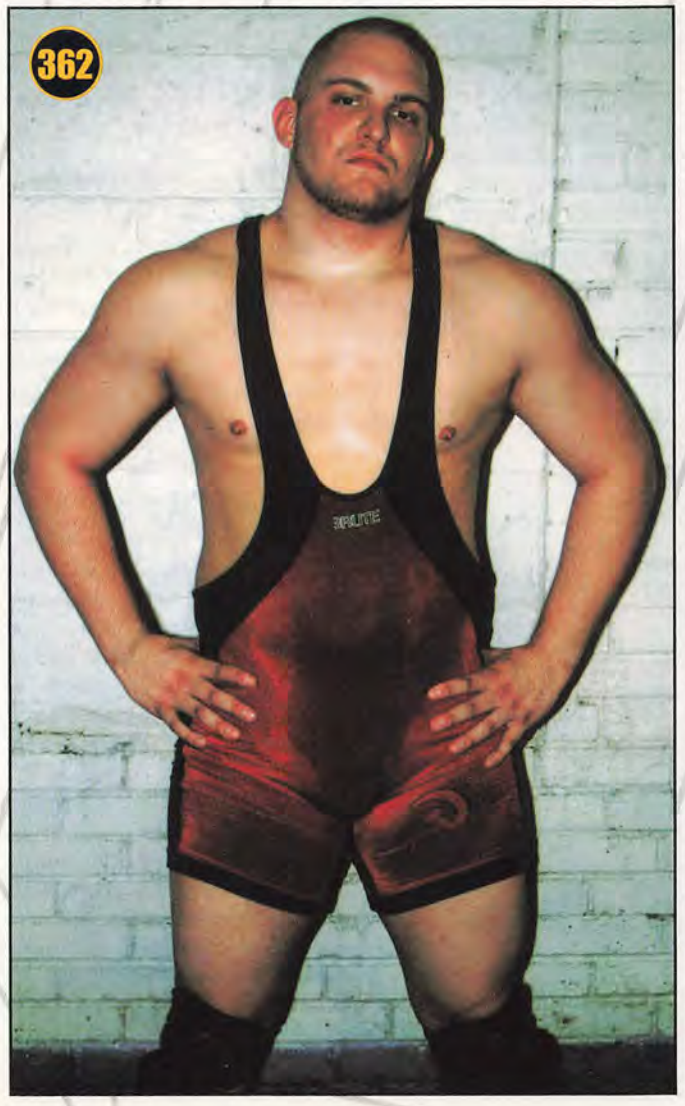
359 LASH LeROUX (5'10", 246, 7, 330) The "Ragin' Cajun" is still collecting wins in the ring when he's not busy creating artwork for *The Wrestler* and other publications … Made the cut at a WCW Power Plant tryout session and enrolled in the training school … Debuted in WCW in February 1999 … Was initially picked up by WWE when it bought WCW, but was released in 2002 … Since then, has been competing in several promotions throughout the South and has appeared in NWA-TNA … An exciting competitor, known for getting so fired up that he starts break-dancing in the ring … One of the most underrated competitors of the past five years.

360 ROCKIN' REBEL (6', 245, 17, NL) Rock 'n' roll will never die, and neither will the Rockin' Rebel … 17-year veteran has been a fixture in 3PW, where he teamed with Greg Matthews as Blackball'd and won the tag belts… Trained by The Rock 'n' Roll Express but wrestles a much more violent style than the Express ever did … Also competes for many promotions in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland … Ring of Honor, Far North Wrestling, and Combat Zone Wrestling would be the most prominent … Finisher is the legdrop, but he has also been known to throw fireballs and blast opponents with chairs … Has had memorable feuds with Zandig and Ruckus.

351-370

361 JOHN RAMBO (6'4", 260, 17, 365) The veteran mainstay of NWL and House of Pain Wrestling has been feuding with Samu since the Headshrinker turned against him and ended their long-running team ... Their feud has included hardcore matches, barbed wire matches, and weapons matches, so there's obviously some bad blood ... Trained by Afa the Wild Samoan and Rocky Johnson ... Signature moves include his bunker buster (a high legdrop between his opponent's legs) and M.O.A.B. flying sidekick off the top rope.

362 NIKITA ALLANOV (6'1", 240, 7, 381) "The Soviet Shooter" is immensely proud of his clean lifestyle and has cut his body fat to 11 percent ... Boasts a bench-press of more than 300 pounds ... Also known as "The Soviet Suplex Machine" ... Has wrestled throughout Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and West Virginia ... Part of the Youth Movement in NWA Pro Wrestling Express and The Axis of Evil in the Eastern Wrestling Alliance ... Finisher is the Spectnatz bomb power bomb variation, usually set up by a double-chest stomp or fishhook ... A rugged shooter with a promising future.



363 JAPANESE POOL BOY (6'1", 190, 6, 377) One of the most popular mainstays of the ECWA, Pool Boy is more noted for his unique ring entrances than anything he does once the bell rings ... Came out dressed as Robin during the tag team summit at the 2005 Super 8 Tournament, at which he teamed with the 380-pound Mega ... That's right, Fat Man and Robin ... Recently called in his cousins The Mexican Pool Boy and The Russian Pool Boy to assist in his feud with The Chick Magnets ... In Dublin, The Irish Pool Boy sits by the phone waiting for a call ... Actually scored the biggest singles win of his career by beating Mike Kruel ... Also competes in Continental Championship Wrestling.

364 ANDY BAKER (6'4", 235, 5, NL) Native of Liverpool, England, has been busy shuttling between Ohio Valley Wrestling and the United Kingdom Wrestling Alliance ... Previously known as Rage, Baker held the UKWA tag team title with his partner, Domino ... Calls his finishing move the silencer ... Combines his native British style of submission wrestling and measured pacing with what he has learned at the OVW Training School, which has made him an extremely well-rounded wrestler despite having been in the ring for just five years.

365 DROPKICK MURPHY (6'4", 215, 4, 389) The self-proclaimed "Canadian Charisma Machine" is the current NWA Canadian junior heavyweight champion, having won the belt from Disco Fury ... Was the first-ever Vancouver Island Pacific Cup champion, beating Aaron Idol and Scotty Mac in the same night ... Regularly competes throughout the Pacific Northwest ... Lost to the original Doink the Clown (Matt Borne) in a match billed as Canada vs. the U.S. ... Claims to be "cooler than you."

366 GREG MATTHEWS (6'2", 235, 3, NL) This former *Tough Enough* competitor is now teaming with veteran tough guy Rockin' Rebel as Blackball'd in Northeast independents ... Won the 3PW tag team belts on May 21 ... Wrestled for CZW, World-1, and ROH just to name a few outlets for his anger ... He and Rebel make a great team, as his power complements Rebel's brawling style very well ... Further proof of that statement: The duo easily won a handicap match against Cheech, Cloudy, and Mike Brown in Pro Wrestling Unplugged in February 2005 ... Slowly gaining the respect of fans and wrestlers alike.

367 DERRICK NEIKIRK (6'4", 245, 4, NL) Originally trained by Les Thatcher in the Heartland Wrestling Association ... Held the HWA tag title with Cody Hawk before leaving for the West Coast ... Has wrestled mainly in Ultimate Pro Wrestling and Impact Zone Wrestling for the last few years while pursuing a career in acting and modeling ... Has appeared in *Muscle Mag* and *Muscle & Fitness* magazines ... Signed to a WWE developmental deal in February 2005.

368 TIM FLOWERS (6', 245, 27, NL) Veteran competitor won the IWC title in a six-man steel cage match and has feuded with The Honky Tonk Man over that championship for most of 2005 ... Teamed with Avalanche to win the ICW tag team title ... Wrestles throughout Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia ... Nicknamed "The Streetfighter" because of his love of hardcore matches ... Finisher is the old-fashioned piledriver ... Managed by Mike Falcone ... First ranked in the 1994 "*PWI* 500" at 294.

369 BRYAN LOGAN (6', 205, 2, NL) Debuted with his brother, Matt, in the ECWA in early-2005 as part of a talent exchange with Chaotic Wrestling... Trained by Mike Hollow and Jim McCarthy ... Took on Ace Darling as a mentor, which proved to be a good learning opportunity ... The Logan Brothers won the tag team summit the night of the 2005 Super 8 Tournament to earn an immediate title shot against The Valedictorians ... Though they came close to taking the belts, The Valedictorians emerged victorious ... Both brothers are surprisingly well-traveled, competing in nearly a dozen Northeastern promotions.

370 APOLLO KAHN (5'10", 215, 3, 415) Known as "The Man With The Golden Smile" ... Khan is one of the most fearsome competitors in California's Pro Wrestling IRON ... Believes most of today's wrestlers are lazy ... "Ain't nobody ever gave me a damn thing," he says. "I had to take whatever I needed by force" ... That pretty much sums up Kahn's in-ring philosophy ... Schooled in submission-style grappling and can also come off the top rope, making him a dangerous competitor.

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371 MACE MENDOZA (5'8", 200, 7, 369) He and Buff-E form The Christopher Street Connection … They are two of the most bizarre, entertaining wrestlers in wrestling today … For example: In November 2004, Mace and Buff-E were scheduled to marry on a USA Pro show. At the wedding, the best man, Striker, admitted they had an affair. Then Mace admitted that his maid of honor, Dana Dameson, was pregnant with his child. After a big fight, The CSC made up with a kiss … *Awwwwww* … Later that night, they won the tag title, which had to be better than exchanging rings … They are the total wrestling package—complete with a cute, pink bow.

372 DELIRIOUS (6', 192, 4, 376) This bizarre masked competitor can leave most fans scratching their heads in disbelief … Has held championship gold in IWA Mid-South, but is best known for his occasional appearances in TNA … Very spastic and almost reptilian in his movements … Will sometimes snatch bugs out of the air and eat them … Combines strong mat wrestling skills with wild high-flying moves … Favorite moves include the stem cell research and the panic attack.

373 DRU ONYX (6'2", 325, 6, NL) The reigning NWA British Commonwealth and Quebec heavyweight champion … Style is a combination of suplexes, intense brawling, and submission wrestling … Has impressive agility for a man his size, routinely stunning opponents with enzuigiris, dropkicks, and even planchas to the arena floor … Won the United Kingdom heavyweight title and defended that championship in England and Ireland … Recorded a rap CD entitled *Sinebriated* under his hip-hop moniker, R-Kade … Actually opened for Ice-T and The Notorious B.I.G. in Montreal … Uses a spear as his finisher … Has also competed as Son of Abdullah.

374 HALLOWICKED (6'1", 192, 3, 457) One of the top graduates from the CHIKARA Wrestle Factory, the man with the black and green Jack o' Lantern mask won the 2002 Young Lions Cup and the 2003 Tag World Grand Prix … Currently teaming with Ultramantis Black as The Dark Breed … Has wrestled in Mexico, Canada, and Europe in the past year … Has also appeared in CZW, IWA Mid-South, and other promotions across the U.S. … The master of the super fisherman buster … Signature hold is the monster mash, an octopus hold turned into a sunset flip.

375 DEVON STORM (6'2", 232, 12, 349) This veteran now plies his trade in the New Jersey area, where he lives, for groups like NWA Cyberspace … Formerly known as Crowbar in WCW and Tempest in TNA … Has held the WCW hardcore and ECWA tag title … A solid technical wrestler who can take to the air if needed … A physical therapist by day … Might best be remembered in the Northeast for teaming with Ace Darling to win several regional tag titles.

376 MATT LOGAN (6', 205, 2, NL) Almost exclusively teams with his brother, Bryan, as The Logan Brothers … Joined the ECWA through a talent swap program with Chaotic Wrestling … The brothers use quick tags, fluid chain wrestling, and old-fashioned tag team strategy to get the best of bigger, more experienced teams … Won the 2005 tag team summit, last eliminating The Chick Magnets, to earn a shot at the ECWA tag title, but lost to champions The Valedictorians … The Logans have won tag titles in Chaotic Wrestling, New England Championship Wrestling, PWF-NE, and NEWA.

377 T. RANTULA (6'7", 350, 13, 343) The enormous brawler is making his 12th consecutive appearance in the "*PWI* 500" … Held the Far North Wrestling heavyweight title for four years until he lost the belt to Seth James in January 2005 … Known as one of the most popular stars in the Pittsburgh area … Teamed with The Patriot to beat James and Brian O. … One of the most intimidating wrestlers anywhere … Had a bloody feud with New Jack last year … Has previously appeared in WWE and WCW.

378 LOTUS (5'10", 170, 3, NL) Native of New Carlisle, Ohio, competes mainly in the Ohio Valley area for groups such as Heartland Wrestling Association, Buckeye Pro Wrestling, and IWA Mid-South … Teams with his brother, Crazy J, who is four inches shorter … Together, they have held both the HWA and BPW tag team titles … High-flying brothers hold a victory over the team of Matt Sydal and Delirious … Recently added a shooting star legdrop to his ever-expanding arsenal.

379 GLEN OSBOURNE (6'1", 260, 4, 350) This powerful veteran still wrestles for independents in Pennsylvania and the surrounding area … His size and occasional use of face paint is reminiscent of The Road Warriors … Has slowed down his schedule considerably in recent years … Wrestles primarily for the WWWA, in which he has been U.S. champion … A power merchant who also utilizes a surprisingly good dropkick.

380 MAHONEY (6'2", 260, 12, 358) This "chair-swinging freak" is getting a new lease on life, thanks to the interest in all things ECW … One of wrestling's premier brawlers, Mahoney is willing to compete in any type of match out there … Has made several WWE appearances, but his past difficulties with the Maryland State Athletic Commission continue to haunt him … Regularly teams with Axl Rotten … A better chain-wrestler than you might think … A throwback wrestler who just wants to have fun and bash some skulls.

371-390

381 BUFF-E (5'10", 220, 7, 368) The yin to Mace's yang in The Christopher Street Connection … A tag team specialist who has held several tag titles, including those in APR, IWW, LIWF, and USA Pro … A versatile wrestler who can brawl with the biggest bullies and chain wrestle with the technical wizards … Despite his technical acumen, he is one of the true masters of comedy wrestling … Often kisses male audience members as he makes his way to the ring … Has held several regional tag titles with Mace.

382 CONRAD KENNEDY III (6'1", 215, 5, 491) CK3 hails from the "mean streets of Ottawa Hills, Ohio" … Just how mean are those streets? So mean that Kennedy says he frequently gets into fights out on the local golf courses … Trained by Rip Malibu and competes all over Michigan and Ohio … Currently feuding with Brad Martin in Border City Wrestling … His spoiled rich boy promos drive the fans crazy … Insists on being announced as "The Symbol Of Excellence" … A former MWF Intercontinental champion … CK3 usually ends his matches with the chump change neckbreaker or the money clip inverted leglock.

383 DIABOLICO (5'8", 220, 12, NL) Another Puerto Rican wrestler who made headlines for jumping from one promotion to its rival … Diabolico returned to the IWA after a two-year stint in the WWC as a mysterious masked ninja who appeared from nowhere and attacked various wrestlers … Uses an impressive frog splash as his finishing move … Held the tag team title in WWC … Extremely fast on his feet and very adept at executing a stick-and-move offense.

384 MR. OOH LA LA (5'10", 230, 17, 397) Oh, the humanity! A *bald* Ooh La La? … The Inspector Clouseau-esque Frenchman with an affinity for lavender lost to Johnny Maxx and had his head shaved bald as the result of a prematch stipulation in November 2004 … As embarrassing as that was, it wasn't nearly as bad as when he lost to Chase Del Monte and had to don a dress and serve as Del Monte's valet for an evening … Ooh La La should really stop signing up for specialty matches … Served as the referee in ECWA's "Super Ate" concession stand match between the gargantuan Mega and Kodiak Bear … Wrestled George "The Animal" Steele and The Patriot in Continental Championship Wrestling.

385 QUINSON VALENTINO (6'3", 245, 6, NL) Valentino is a gifted promo man who has made a handful of WWE appearances … His look can be called a cross between a vampiric Christopher Daniels and a pirate … An impressive talent on the Canadian independent circuit … Won the AWWL (Michigan) TV title and is a leader in Jason Jerry's Empire in NWA Wisconsin … Participated in one of OVW's annual tryout camps … Finishing moves are the superplex and the standing neckbreaker.

386 SEBASTIAN DARK (6'1", 220, 8, NL) Has the dubious distinction of being the most hated man—on camera and off—in the International Wrestling Cartel … Convinced Super Hentai to turn against the fans … The two orchestrated a swerve that saw Dark "blind" Hentai with alcohol, but it turns out it was just water … Now teaming with HENTAI … Previously known as Vladamir Vampyre … Very proud of a win he earned over Jimmy Jacobs … Frequently interrupts IWC commentary by storming the broadcast booth and delivering loud, obnoxious rants.

387 SHIRLEY DOE (5'10", 230, 10, 492) Veteran madman from the Dixmont Mental Hospital has wrestled some of the highest-profile bouts of his career after briefly mulling retirement due to knee problems … Beat Eric Xstasy for the International Wrestling Cartel title in a match refereed by Mick Foley … Lost and regained the belt from Mahoney … Has made it his personal mission to turn the IWC title into a recognized world championship … Defended the belt in Japan against Seiji Ikeda … Recently wrestled Abyss in a brutal casket match in Vanton, Ohio … An avid collector of Japanese wrestling tapes.

388 BRENT DAIL (6', 220, 5, NL) One of Dory Funk Jr.'s prized students … Dail has literally been the poster boy for Funk's wrestling school for several years, but is only now starting to make an impact on his own … Started testing himself in Puerto Rico, and after a few awkward months, began to hit his stride … Won the WWC junior heavyweight title in 2003 … Apparently Funk taught Dail all about good heel turns, as Dail betrayed partner Alex Montalvo and adopted a much more aggressive ring style … Now known as "Mr. USA" … An incredible physical specimen who has shown good bursts of potential.

389 JIGSAW (6'1", 172, 2, NL) CHIKARA's wrestling riddle is known for his distinctive black and red puzzle piece mask … Captutred the Young Lions Cup in November with a win over Larry Sweeney … The premier high-flier of CHIKARA … Has been feuding with the evil Sweet and Sour International faction … Wrestled in both Europe and Mexico over the past year … His skull-crushing finishing move is called the jig 'n' tonic … Has also wrestled in IWA Mid-South, CZW, and more than a dozen other indy promotions, and has won over new fans in each new territory.

390 HOOK BOMBERRY (5'6", 165, 3, 465) Busy making a name for himself in California, at his main home of Pro Wrestling Iron as well as other indies around the area … Has also wrestled in Canada for ECCW … A former Supreme Pro Wrestling tag champ … A native of Davis, California … Known for his arsenal of submission techniques … Utilizes the "ground and pound" technique … A young athlete who has a tremendous upside.

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391 CRAZY J (5'6", 156, 3, NL) Teams with his larger brother, Lotus, in the HWA, Buckeye Pro Wrestling, and IWA Mid-South ... Crazy J and Lotus have held both the HWA and BPW tag belts ... Master of the double-shot ... When he's not teaming with his brother, Crazy J is often competing in intergender tag bouts teaming with his girlfriend, Nevaeh ... High-flying brothers hold a win over the team of Matt Sydal and Delirious.

392 FRANKIE CAPONE (5'10", 230, 8, 407) One-half of the reigning NWA-Florida tag team champions "Double Deuce" with Marcus Dillon ... Capone also holds the EWW British heavyweight championship ... Their tag team finisher is the B.O.C., Capone's K-5 reverse stunner into Dillon's running spear ... Feuding with Ron Niemi's 911 Incorporated ... Completed two tours of England with Extreme World Warfare ... Has appeared on NWA-TNA *Impact* several times, including an NWA title match against Jeff Jarrett.

393 CHRIS TAYLOR (5'9", 165, 4, NL) "Mr. 21st Century" was trained at the Pittsburgh Wrestling Academy ... Grabbed the vacant NWA-PWX Three Rivers championship with a win over Crusher Hansen, but lost the title to Spryal in December 2004 ... Regained that title in January, beating Nikita Allanov after the title had been declared vacant again ... Also held the EWA and KCW cruiserweight titles ... Was at the forefront of the Youth Movement, pledging to take out "the old relic" Hansen ... Won the eighth annual 'Burgh Brawl in February 2005, becoming the smallest wrestler ever to win that event ... Managed by Krystal Frost.

394 CHEETAH MASTER (6'1", 221, 15, 382) Widely considered to be the most popular wrestler in the 37-year history of the ECWA ... High-octane entrance to the strains of "Welcome To The Jungle" still gets the fans excited, even after 15 years in the company ... Was injured in the summer of 2004, but returned to the ring in the fall of that year ... One-time high-flyer has adopted more of a mat-based style in recent years, but still can soar with the eagles when he feels the need ... Has recently feuded with Mr. Ooh La La, Freak Nastty, and Prince Nana ... Also competes in Pennsylvania's Continental Championship Wrestling, in which he has feuded with Sal Sincere.

395 GRAN AKUMA (5'10", 199, 2, 496) High-flying *technico* from CHIKARA traveled all over the world last year, competing in Canada, Mexico, and throughout the U.S. ... Known for his Lucha Libre-influenced wrestling style and his powerful kicks ... Forms a tag team known as F.I.S.T. with Icarus ... The two wrestled in the 32-team World Grand Prix tag tournament, losing to Claudio Castagnoli and Arik Cannon ... Favorite finisher is the Falcon Arrow first popularized by Hayabusa, but Gran Akuma also has a picture perfect frog splash and high cross-body ... Likes to use the Yoshi Tonic high speed pinning combination ... Extremely popular and technically sound.

396 C.J. O'DOYLE (5'11", 192, 2, 408) He has quite possibly the palest skin on the independents, even for a redhead ... Three words of advice: sunless tanning lotion ... Now that he is comfortable with his skills, he really should focus on his look ... Trained by "Pit Bull" Gary Wolfe ... Starting to come into his own in 3PW, in which he is steadily climbing toward a title shot ... Arsenal of finishers include the west side sickle and Celtic crunch (top-rope legdrop).

397 SCOTTIE GASH (5'10", 210, 5, 404) Gash continues to be one of the most hated men in NWA-PWX ... Was a charter member of the Youth Movement faction ... Was sidelined with a broken ankle for four months ... Returned to the ring to take part in a war zone match with the stipulation that the losing team had to shake hands with the winning team ... Gash refused to shake anyone's hand except for champion Brandon K, then he spit in Brandon's face ... An intense series of grudge matches followed ... Known as "The Spotlight" ... Won the inaugural Ray Mendez Memorial tournament.

398 KRAZY K (5'11", 185, 4, 462) The man who calls himself "Your New Addiction" realized his professional dream by beating Steve Corino to win the OMEGA heavyweight championship in February 2005 ... Has defended the title against Jerrelle Clarke, C.W. Anderson, Justice, and Chasyn Rance ... Krazy K has also had a stranglehold on the OMEGA cruiserweight title ever since winning that belt from A.J. Styles in May 2002 ... Occasionally teams with his brother T.J. Mack as Team Macktion ... Suffered a collapsed lung, which caused him to miss a few months of action last year.

399 EDDIE GUAPO (5'11", 215, 4, 429) Wrestled Mana for the WXW heavyweight title in a loser-leaves-town match ... Won the match, but the decision was reversed and Guapo was forced to leave the company ... Was eventually reinstated several months later ... Reunited with E.C. Negro to reform the original Dirty Rotten Scoundralz, then challenged Negro for his WXW TV title ... Beat Negro for that belt in February 2005 ... Suffered a broken collarbone in March but took no time off ... Trained by Homicide ... Calls his neckbreaker finisher "sweet dreams."

400 THE BOUNCER (6', 285, 9, 402) The Bouncer is the last guy you want to run in to at the end of the night ... Had success in both singles and tag team competition this year, winning the AXW tag belts with Chuck Brody and beating J.T. Lightning for the MCW U.S. title ... Also teams with Curt Fury as Klub X-treme ... Debuted in NWA-PWX as an entrant in their annual "'Burgh Brawl" battle royal ... Still a mainstay in Mega Championship Wrestling ... Finishes opponents with either his last call superkick or his happy hour, a fireman's carry into a Michinoku driver.

391-410

401 CODY STEELE (6', 213, 5, NL) "Completely" Cody had a breakout year that saw him appear in both NWA-TNA and WWE ... Faced Muhammad Hassan in a dark match in Buffalo, New York, then faced Kurt Angle in the Angle challenge the next night in Rochester in November 2004 ... Lost to Abyss on *Impact* in July 2004 ... Spent most of the past year feuding with fellow Ontario standout Derek Wylde over the services of valet Jennifer Blake and the Neo Spirit Grand and Independent titles ... Beat Wylde in an intense bout that last 59 minutes 59 seconds ... Often compared to an early-career Edge, but may be more versatile.

402 SHAWN PATRICK (6', 215, 3, NL) One half of The O.C. Boyz in the ECWA ... Bet you didn't know Delaware was a hotbed for surfer boys ... The Boyz have come close to winning the ECWA tag title on several occasions, but just haven't been able to get the best of The Valedictorians ... Made a brief appearance on *Smackdown* as part of a celebration in honor of JBL, only to be thrown down the ramp by a rampaging Big Show ... Also wrestles for KYDA Pro Wrestling, in which he reigned as Mid-Atlantic champion from April 2004 to March 2005 ... Finishing move is the wave crasher.

403 GEORGE SOUTH SR. (6', 240, 23, 399) This longtime NWA preliminary wrestler has been battling Brad Armstrong throughout the Carolinas ... Took on Fabulous Mr. Franklin as his manager this year ... Lost high-profile matches against The Masked Superstar, Bobby Fulton, and David Flair ... Years of exposure on national TV have made him a well-known commodity ... Once wrestled Ric Flair in an extremely competitive nationally televised bout before succumbing to the figure-four ... Influenced his son, George South Jr., to turn his back on the fans.

404 ADEN CHAMBERS (6'1", 190, 4, NL) The taller and more boyish-looking member of The O.C. Boyz in the ECWA ... Chambers and partner Shawn Patrick are the most popular team in the ECWA, modeling themselves as laidback surfer boys in the style of the TV show *The O.C.* ... Has feuded with The Valedictorians, The Canadian Superstars, and The Chick Magnets ... Appeared on *Smackdown* during the JBL championship celebration but ended up being slid down a table and through an ice sculpture by The Big Show ... Now that's just cold ... Has also competed in KYDA Pro Wrestling, the NWL, and WAW.

405 RYAN O'REILLY (6'6", 280, 4, NL) The tall Irishman has been up close and personal with Viscera, facing Big Vis on every match of a two-week tour of South Korea in August 2004 ... Actually beat Viscera in seven of those eight matches ... Has also been in the ring with such names as Headbanger Chaz and Gangrel ... Has also had successful tours of Puerto Rico and appeared in TNA ... Currently in Deep South with a WWE developmental deal ... Trained by Norman Smiley ... Finishing moves are the river dance and the decidedly politically incorrect Irish car bomb ... A former NWA Sunray heavyweight champion.

406 J-ROCC (6', 227, 6, 412) J-Rocc has made several appearances on NWA-TNA *Xplosion*, including a close tag match against The Naturals ... Also faced Alex Shelley, Jeff Jarrett, and Abyss ... Scored a big win over Marty Jannetty in NPEW then embarked on a violent feud with Sheik Abdul Hassan, which culminated in a steel cage bout ... Faced Nigel McGuinness the HWA ... Has formed an alliance with Tracey Smothers in an effort to relieve Shirley Doe of the IWC title ... Got a taste of Mr. Socko when he started trouble with Mick Foley ... Looked like he was about to beat Petey Williams in a IWC match until New Jack interfered, allowing Williams to flatten J-Rocc with the Canadian Destroyer.

407 GLENN SPECTRE (5'10", 201, 5, 420) Spectre has dramatically changed his look, adopting the name "Wonder Man" and wearing a Wonder Woman-style outfit ... He also uses some, shall we say, flamboyant tactics reminiscent of Rico and Goldust ... Native of Elyria, Ohio, now claims he hails from the Halls of Justice ... Toured Japan three times in the past year, winning the DDT tag team title with Dino as The Gay Machine Guns ... Beat Danny Doring for the NWA Upstate heavyweight title in Rochester, New York ... Scored perhaps the biggest win of his life when he upset Christopher Daniels in the first round of the IWC Super Indy Tournament ... Finishers are called the Glennema *(ick!)* and the shining asteroid.

408 SUPREME LEE GREAT (5'10", 220, 6, 463) The Pride of Crestwood High School in Mountaintop, Pennsylvania, entered a best-of-seven, career-vs.-career challenge with Suede ... Suede shattered his collarbone early in that series and had to pull out ... Teamed with The Dynamic Sensation for most of 2004 and then left his home promotion of WXW ... Currently competing in several California promotions and in the CSWF, PCMPW, and NWA-WAW on the East Coast ... Won the NWA-WAW U.S. heavyweight title ... Has begun wrestling overseas and is feuding with The Black Pearl in Italy.

409 JEFF STARR (6'1", 219, 6, 439) "Mr. Spotlight" continues to shine in Upstate New York ... Managed by Kenny Cassanova ... Has wrestled WWE dark matches against Sylvain Grenier, Johnny Stamboli, Haku, and Jaime Noble ... Finishing moves are the swanton bomb and the superkick ... Formed Damage Inc. with Danger in World of Hurt Wrestling and is feuding with Chuck Deep ... A high-flier with solid technical wrestling skills ... Has held the WOHW cruiserweight, tag team, and heavyweight titles ... Has also wrestled in Texas, California, and Florida.

410 EDDIE KINGSTON (5'1", 228, 2, 471) The obnoxious "King Of Diamonds" has been competing as a singles wrestler ever since his Wild Cards partner, Jack Marciano, left CHIKARA ... A former IWA Mid-South tag team champion ... Also competes in CZW as part of the Black Out faction ... Proved his mettle by surviving one of CZW's ridiculously violent Cage of Death bouts ... Lost his hair last May at the climax of a lengthy feud against fellow CHIKARA Wrestle Factory graduates Gran Akuma and Icarus ... His Yakuza kick is especially feared ... Trained by Mike Quackenbush, but patterns his style after his hero, Eddie Gilbert ... Kingston has great execution on his exploder and uranage suplexes, and his trademark submission hold is the Kondo clutch.

PWI 500

411 GREG SPITZ (6'3", 198, 5, 423) This former comedy wrestler has grown up and finally started to wrestle seriously … Earned himself a roster spot in 3PW before the promotion took a hiatus this summer … Not much of a high-flyer, but he will take to the air if needed … Is more suited for a ground-based attack … Wrestles for many of the smaller promotions in Pennsylvania and New Jersey … Made his ECWA debut this year … A comic book fanatic.

412 DON BASHER (6', 290, 20, 432) The "Dangerous Bull" has held the WCWO heavyweight title a record 17 times … Currently feuding with Apocalypse … That feud has seen both men bleed buckets … Wants nothing more than to regain his precious WCWO belt, which currently is in the possession of Indiana Kidd Jr. … One of the top fan favorites in WCWO … A veteran brawler and power merchant … Spent several months as WCWO commissioner a while back.

413 MOZART FONTAINE (5'9", 201, 6, 454) One-third of The Chick Magnets, along with Brian Soscia and Mike Tobin … Known as "Fabulous" Mozart Fontaine and says he weighs in at "a finely tuned 201 pounds" … Managed by the devious yet diminutive Carlton P. Hightower … The trio dresses up in matching back trunks and Chippendales-style bow ties, but that's where the comparisons to the Chippendales dancers ends … Trying to make tear-away warm-ups popular … Has held the ECWA Mid-Atlantic title … Fontaine has feuded with just about everyone in ECWA.

414 HURACAN CASTILLO (5'9", 230, 20, NL) The long-time IWA veteran jumped to the WWC and joined The New Starr Corporation … Apparently that decision didn't work out as well as he hoped, because he has since joined the Puerto Rican independent promotion NWS and is dedicated to helping that young upstart company blossom into a major force in Puerto Rico … Was part of Los Boricuas in the WWF in the late-1990s … A veteran spitfire who is ready to brawl at any time.

415 SEXXXY EDDIE (6'1", 195, 6, NL) Hails from "Very Long Beach, California" … We'd tell you the names of his favorite finishing moves, but they're just not appropriate for a family magazine … Let's just say he's a heck of a high-flier and leave it at that … Has been competing in CZW and Jersey All Pro Wrestling … Was part of the Cage of Death match in CZW in December 2004, teaming with Chris Cash, J.C. Bailey, and Nate Webb against Ruckus, Sabian, Eddie Kingston, and Jack Evans … Stole the show in that match when he executed a moonsault off the top of the cage with a trash can around his body … Fans find his choice of ring attire either sexy or scary.

416 K-PUSHA (5'11", 170, 4, NL) Teams with K-Murda as All Money Is Legal … Hails from The Bronx … Greatest moment of the past year was when AMIL faced Homicide and B-Boy in the main event of a Politically Incorrect Wrestling card last July … Managed by Dizzie … Quick tags and frequent double-teams are AMIL trademarks … AMIL has feuded with The Dirty Rotten Scoundralz, The Elm Street Kidz, and The Outkast Killaz … Has wrestled in NWA-Cyberspace, CHIKARA, WXW, CZW, and several other promotions … All Money Is Legal often uses the push it and pay'd 'n' full as its finishing moves.

417 ROMAN (6'1", 232, 5, 418) Roman captured his fourth Independent Wrestling Federation heavyweight title in April with a win over Fred Sampson … That same month, he appeared as a fan on *Raw* as part of the Masterlock challenge … Roman has made many such unaccredited WWE appearances, including as one of Undertaker's druids at WrestleMania XX, one of Kurt Angle's private security guards, and in two WWE commercials … Has feuded with Sampson, Chris Candido, and Shane O'Brien … Finisher is the Roman candle, a full-nelson slam … Also competes in Chaotic Wrestling and the NWS.

418 CHASE DEL MONTE (6'1", 215, 1, NL) Native of the Jersey Shore is a former ECWA Mid-Atlantic champion and the reigning Chaotic Wrestling New England champion … Flashy rookie with the toothy grin is impressing fans and peers throughout the Northeast … Biggest feud to date was against Brian Milonas, the man he beat for the New England title … Uses his unique versions of the Diamond cutter and the frog splash as his main finishing moves.

419 TONY GIVENS (6, 183, 5, NL) "The Dragon" spent most of the past year teaming with Robbie Cassidy and feuding with Cruel Intentions over the Championship Wrestling tag team title … Givens and Cassidy finally won the straps on September 18, 2004, in a match officiated by Rick "The Dragon" Steamboat … Has been competing as a singles wrestler in recent months … Likes to win matches with a triangle choke/armbar … Also uses the shining wizard knee strike … Competes mainly in Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky.

420 INVADER I (5'10", 220, 40, NL) In the U.S., he will always be remembered as the man who was tried and acquitted in the stabbing death of Bruiser Brody in a locker room shower, but incredibly, Puerto Ricans fans have put all of that behind them and embrace Invader as a national hero … The 40-year veteran is feuding with Savio Vega … Vega has gotten Invader's heart punch banned, claiming it is a potentially deadly move … Took an active role in developing new talent and began training a new generation of youngsters to try to help them take the next step … Very few wrestlers can match his experience, but Invader has slowed considerably from his 1980s heyday.

411-430

421 K-MURDA (5'8", 165, 4, NL) One-half of the team All Money Is Legal, along with K-Pusha ... Greatest moment of the past year was when AMIL faced Homicide and B-Boy in the main event of a Politically Incorrect Wrestling card last July ... Managed by Dizzie ... AMIL has feuded with The Dirty Rotten Scoundralz, The Elm Street Kidz, and The Outkast Killaz ... Has wrestled in NWA-Cyberspace, CHIKARA, WXW, CZW, and several other promotions ... The team's main finishers are the double-team Redrum DDT and the dead prezidents.

422 DEAN RADFORD (6'4", 260, 3, NL) One of the most devastating power wrestlers in the International Wrestling Cartel ... Beat Sterling James Keenan for the IWC heavyweight title in spring 2004, but lost the title to Eric Xstasy, thanks to interference from J.T. Rodgers ... Was forced to take some time off after suffering a painful neck injury ... Came back in October and began picking off members of Xstasy's Velvet Mafia one by one ... Finally got his hands on Xstasy and hit him with his Radicator Death Valley driver, sending Xstasy packing from the IWC ... Currently teaming with Jason Gory in a feud with Sebastian Dark and HENTAI.

423 LUIZ ORTIZ (5'9", 210, 9, NL) Known as "Latin Fury," Ortiz is one of the highest-profile wrestlers on the Chaotic Wrestling roster ... Holds the distinction of being Chaotic's first Triple Crown winner, as he is a former two-time heavyweight champion, two-time tag champion, and former TV champion ... Scored a big win over Jay Lethal in February 2005 ... Has competed in WWE dark matches ... Main finisher is a split-legged moonsault ... Added several new offensive moves to his repertoire after competing in Japan.

424 P.T. HUSSLA (6'1", 254, 4, NL) Hussla is a former WCWO heavyweight champion and regularly teams with D-Von Fury as Simply Marvelous ... Hussla currently holds the TNW Midwest heavyweight title, beating Indiana Kidd in the title tournament finals ... Also feuding with Kidd over the WCWO title ... Has had some of his best matches against C.W. Anderson, Nigel McGuinness, Tracey Smothers, Colt Cabana, and Chad Collyer ... Covets the CWF heavyweight title currently held by Shawn Cook.

425 SHAWN OSBORNE (6', 220, 4, NL) Defeated Rory Fox for the Heartland Wrestling Association heavyweight title in March 2005 ... Known as "Bad Seed" Shawn Osborne ... Feud with Ben Kimera resulted in some brutal hardcore brawls that saw Osborne break out a version of the Van terminator, hitting a dropkick from the top rope clear across the ring ... Has also defended the title against Matt Stryker ... Finisher is a full-nelson slam ... Has been proving himself ever since he won the belt to critics who claimed he was a fluke champion.

426 KEVIN KNIGHT (6'4", 240, 9, 446) Teamed with Dan McGuire to win the IWF tag team belts in October 2004 ... This is his eighth consecutive appearance in the "*PWI* 500" in nine years as a pro ... Feuded with The Honky Tonk Man, Jim Neidhart, and Fred Sampson over the past year ... Finisher is the Knight-fall, a Razor's edge variation ... Faced JBL in a non-televised tune-up match held at WWE headquarters to prep the Smackdown champion for his upcoming match against The Big Show ... Regularly competes in Japan and has made numerous WWE appearances ... Also competes in Chaotic Wrestling, NWS, and ACWA ... A trainer at the IWF wrestling camp.

427 J.P. BLACK (6'1", 251, 7, NL) The "Dark Pony" rides again in Upstate New York! ... The powerhouse known as "The Dark Pony" recently moved back to the Rochester, New York, area after spending the last few years in Texas ... Held the HIW (Texas City) heavyweight title for a full year and also held the CTPW (Austin) heavyweight title ... Reappeared in NWA-Upstate where he saved his old New Millennium Wrestling counterpart Chip Stetson from an attack by Hellcat's Osawa Syndicate ... Feuded in Texas with The Devastator, Psycho Simpson, and Johnny Blade ... Incredibly powerful competitor calls his finisher the dark pony rider.

428 JOHNNY MAXX (6'4", 225, 5, 445) "Maximum" Johnny is a former East Coast Wrestling Association tag team champion, teaming with his brother Joey ... Now competes almost exclusively as a singles wrestler ... Extremely popular with the fans ... Finishing move is the maximum overdrive ... Also has competed in Pennsylvania's Continental Championship Wrestling ... Maxx's height gives him a leverage advantage over most of the wrestlers he faces in ECWA and CCW.

429 MIKE DELL (5'8", 205, 7, 498) Two-time Texas Wrestling Entertainment tag team champion with "Showtime" Scott Summers ... Known as "One Man" Mike Dell for his catchphrase, "It only takes One Man to beat your ass" ... Feuded with Summers when Show-time turned against him in March 2005 ... Dell challenged Japanese superstar The Great Kazushi for the TWE Texas heavyweight title, but came up short ... A former American Championship Wrestling Texas champion ... Has feuded with Mexican legend L.A. Park.

430 INDIANA KIDD JR. (6'1", 242, 10, NL) The reigning WCWO heavyweight champion ... Beat his arch-rival, P.T. Hussla, for that belt ... Kidd's feud with Hussla also extends into TNW, in which the two are feuding over Hussla's Midwest heavyweight title ... Holds the CWF tag team title with Rob Ramer as well ... Ramer and Kidd beat Hussla and D-Von Fury for that title.

PWI 500

431 BRIAN SOSCIA (5'11", 193, 5, NL) Brian Soscia is the junior member of The Chick Magnets in the ECWA … Teams with "Fabulous" Mozart Fontaine and Mike Tobin … The trio is managed by Carlton P. Hightower … Known for their constant preening and showboating, and some occasional awkward dancing … The Chick Magnets are top contenders for the ECWA tag title and have feuded with The Logan Brothers and The O.C. Boyz.

432 JOHN CURSE (5'9", 216, 8, 447) Former member of Team Tazz spent the past year working almost exclusively for NYWC … Teamed with former student Mike Mondo on several occasions … Known for his clean technical style and has added several new submission holds to his arsenal in hopes of winning the NYWC title … Also runs the NYWC training center in Deer Park, New York … Has also teamed with Ken Scampi and Mikey Whipwreck in the past.

433 J-BUSTA (5'10", 202, 6, 478) Native of Montreal calls himself "The Canadian Sensation" … Has competed for the Delaware-based ECWA and Chaotic Wrestling … Challenged Chase Del Monte for the ECWA Mid-Atlantic title, but came up short … Has feuded with Mozart Fontaine, The Japanese Pool Boy, Johnny Maxx, and Mike Fury … Held the WXW cruiserweight title in 2004 … A solid competitor who has been competing throughout the East Coast.

434 ROD STEELE (6'6", 250, 15, 500) The very first OVW heavyweight champion was enjoying his retirement from the ring, writing poetry and Motocross racing, but was compelled to return to the ring because of fan demand … Trained by Rip Rogers … Bears a striking—and perhaps not so coincidental—resemblance to Randy Savage … Usually competes in tag team matches these days … Is known for making the tag and scoop slamming everyone in sight as the fans chant "*Scooooooop*, slam!" … A cult favorite in OVW who usually gets a huge ovation just for coming to the ring.

435 ERIC EVERLAST (6'4", 265, 6, NL) "The Exceptional Icon" has returned to the *"PWI* 500" after not being listed in 2004 … Was ranked 410th in 2002 and 417th in 2003 … Trained by Killer Kowalski … Everlast heightened his profile with a major feud with Damien Alexander in Empire State Wrestling in Buffalo, New York … Also competes in NWA Upstate, the International Wrestling Federation, and World of Hurt Wrestling … Holds a black belt in judo … Known for his wicked choke-slam and his "exceptional" slam … Lost a hair vs. hair match to his brother, Mikey, but found a loophole that forced Mikey to get *his* head shaved … Has been pushing for a match against NWA Upstate commentator Scotty Bender.

436 LARRY HUNTLEY (6'1", 279, 6, NL) "The Enforcer" won the eight-man Jay "Kildevil" DiPaolo Invitational Tournament, an event named in honor of one of his close friends … Located his "long lost brother," "Handsome" Johnny, and began teaming as The Huntley Boys … Sounds like an episode of *Montel* to us … Huntley has held the AWA New England and ICW heavyweight titles and the NWH tag team title three times … Signature move is the spinshank, a torture rack into a dropping backbreaker.

437 SCOTT ZENZEN (6'1", 235, 4, NL) The former postal worker is known throughout the Texas independent circuit as a loose cannon … Zenzen redefines the phrase "going postal" … Lost the Texas All-Star heavyweight title to "Hacksaw" Jim Duggan last August and began teaming with former rival Chris Allen … Together, Allen and Zenzen captured the Texas All-Star tag belts … Won the Texas Toughest Tournament in American Wrestling Empire, beating long-time rivals Dusty Wolfe and Mr. Entertainment … Calls his finishing move the ticket to Broadway.

438 DJ P ROC (6'5", 245, 5, NL) The big man is also known as Mr. Al B! Damm … Was part of Triple Heat in WCEW along with The Stro and Aaron Devil until Devil turned against the team … Feuded with Ali Steele over the WCEW and RWC championships … Beat Steele for the WCEW title, becoming the first man to simultaneously hold two titles in NCEW history … Competes around North Carolina, but has also wrestled in Canada and Florida … Main finisher is his one-hit wonder variation of the Juvi driver.

439 SNATCH HAGGIS (6', 250, 4, 480) This has been a turbulent year for Haggis … Won the NWL heavyweight title and broke away from manager Mike Hay … That put Haggis at odds with Hay's other grapplers in Clan Hay … Feuded with Sean Patrick, Chris Nightmare, Joseph Brooks, and the frightening Fatty McNasty … Also competing throughout Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania … A former KYDA Pro hardcore and Mid-Atlantic champion … Finishers include the inverted suplex and the superplex.

440 MEGA (6'7", 380, 4, 469) The man's motto is, "Fat is good!" and it's obvious he takes those words to heart—or stomach … The super heavyweight is the resident giant in the ECWA and he's a huge (no pun intended) fan favorite, especially with the kids … The gentle giant has feuded with Prince Nana, The Chick Magnets, and Kodiak Bear … Beat Kodiak Bear in the ECWA's first-ever concession stand match … Enormously powerful and slow to anger, but can show real fire when he gets riled—or when people pick on his friends … Occasionally competes in the NYWC.

431-450

441 BILLY BART (5'10", 261, 11, 485) The "Bad Boy" is living up to that name, establishing himself as one of the most hated wrestlers in the Midwest … Lost to Jimmy Valiant on Thanksgiving Night 2004, but don't think for a moment that loss humbled him … Has been feuding with Brian Roberts in the CWF for several months … Bart was wreaking havoc in TNW until Hillbilly Jed came to the rescue and challenged Bart to an annihilation match, which is just as brutal as it sounds … Traveled to Florida to train with Dory Funk Jr. in April.

442 RUSSELL SIMPSON (6'1", 230, 6, 425) "Psycho" Simpson hails from "The Asylum" and often wrestles in his boxer shorts … Known for his devastating butt bump … Defeated Devastator for the Christian Wrestling Federation heavyweight title in July 2003 … Sometimes brings a doll to the ring as his inspiration, but the doll isn't nearly as inspiring as his personal nurse, the lovely Nurse Venus … Serves as the head trainer for Champions of Texas Pro Wrestling.

443 JOHNNY GRAHAM (5'10", 225, 18, 426) The wily veteran has adopted the nickname "The Indy Legend" … Greatest moment of the past year came when he wrestled Jimmy Valiant in Valiant's last West Virginia appearance before retiring from active competition … Competes throughout West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey … Feud with Shane Shadows raged on in four different promotions … Held the CPW title and the Susquehanna Wrestling Organization title … Finisher is the Graham cracker.

444 DARIN CHILDS (5'9", 212, 6, 474) Childs has spent most of the past year competing for Rudy Boy Gonzales in Texas Wrestling Entertainment … Formed The Rock 'n' Roll Nightmares with Joey Spector and valet "Rockin'" Rachel Putski … The Nightmares are two-time TWE tag champions … Has competed throughout Mexico as Sin Mascara Black Rocker … Feuded with Seth Shai and Enigma over the SWWF Xtreme title, culminating in a big ladder match in December 2004 … ASPW's Wrestler of the Year in 2002 and 2003.

445 SHAWN CHRISTOPHER (5'9", 220, 10, NL) "Showtime" Shawn returned to the ring in July 2004 as the special guest referee in the finals of the HCW heavyweight tournament … Was less than an impartial referee when he smashed a chair over Mike Harris' head, allowing Billy Maverick to win the match and the title … Formed The New Age Horsemen with Maverick and has been causing trouble for all the HCW fan favorites … Began a vicious feud with Alex Walker that has resulted in some of the most violent matches in HCW history … Finisher is the slingshot suplex.

446 ICARUS (5'10", 174, 3, NL) Previously competed as the masked Ichabod Slayne in CHIKARA, but turned over a new leaf after losing his mask to Blind Rage … Among the first class of graduates from the CHIKARA Wrestle Factory … Teams with Gran Akuma as F.I.S.T. … Over the past year, Icarus has branched out, wrestling for JCW, CZW, IWA Mid-South, and several other promotions from Minnesota to Massachusetts … Made his debut with Mexico's ENESMA promotion as well … Surprises opponents with his split-legged moonsault from the corner … Capable of absorbing tremendous punishment and bouncing back for more … Signature move his shiranui … Tremendously popular with female fans.

447 JUSTIN IDOL (5'8", 185, 7, NL) "The Aerial Icon" has consistently been one of the most popular wrestlers in NWA Pro Wrestling Express … Spent the summer of 2004 leading an "old school team" against the rulebreaking Youth Movement faction, culminating in a main event showdown at NWA PWX's 10th anniversary card … Had a brutal feud with Chris Taylor over the Three Rivers championship, including a wild dog-collar match … Competes throughout Pennsylvania, Ohio, and the Carolinas … Held the ICW North American, CAPW cruiserweight, and CWF tag titles during the past year … Has faced Chris Hamrick, Sean Waltman, and Sonjay Dutt … Signature moves are the rope breaker (a spinning neckbreaker with his foe's feet on the top rope) and his vital idol snapmare into a Death Valley driver.

448 HANDSOME JOHNNY (6'1", 255, 3, NL) One-half of Pretty Psycho with his best friend, Psycho … Won the Chaotic Wrestling tag belts by outlasting six other teams in a tag team gauntlet match in June 2004 … Debuted in the ECWA last September in a match against Scotty Charisma … Lost the belts in a controversial match to The Valedictorians, but Johnny and Psycho regained the title on January 8 in a tag team ladder match … After losing the belts to The Logan Brothers, Johnny and Psycho are trying their luck as singles wrestlers.

449 J.T. LIGHTNING (5'10", 242, 13, 497) Home promotion is Cleveland All-Pro Wrestling, but he competes throughout Ohio, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Tennessee … Often teams with Sterling James Keenan … Managed by Krystal Frost … Held the Mega Championship Wrestling heavyweight title for most of the past year … Has previously appeared in TNA, where Lightning hopes to strike more than once … Feuded with Bane and Da Munchies this year.

450 FRANKY THE MOBSTER (6'3", 250, 8, NL) The man with the imposing name had a big comeback year, expanding beyond his home base of Northern Championship Wrestling and competing in the International Wrestling Syndicate … Beat Pierre-Carl Ouellette in a six-way mayhem bout to win the IWS heavyweight title … Also feuded with Sinn and the up-and-coming Kevin Steen … Then it was on to CZW, where he beat B-Boy for the ironman championship … Has also appeared in Jersey All Pro and Toronto's Squared Circle … Known for his credibility statement finishing move.

PWI 500

451 ANDRE LYONZ (5'10", 200, 3, NL) A former tag team specialist, Lyonz tried his hand at singles wrestling in Chaotic Wrestling and the ECWA … Known for his breathtaking senton bomb … Fell into a bad losing streak and was given a "three strike" challenge by Chaotic management, meaning if he didn't win one of his next three matches, he'd lose his spot on the roster … Those matches ended up being against Low-Ki, Austin Aries, and John Walters, and Lyonz lost all three bouts, though he put in a strong effort each time … Loudly complained he was the victim of a conspiracy in that he had to face such accomplished opponents … Currently competing in several New England indy promotions.

452 KEVIN BAKER (6'2", 252, 3, NL) "The Candyman" is a graduate of the Blue Water Wrestling Academy … A native of Hershey, Pennsylvania, which explains the candy fetish—sort of … Former Blue Water Championship Wrestling tag team champion with Michael Barnes as Sugar and Spice … Also a former MFW heavyweight champion … Baker has recently begun competing as a singles wrestler after Barnes went down with an injury … Feuding with D-Ray 3000 … Calls his version of the sidewalk slam the candy slam.

453 JOLLY ROGER (6', 177, 2, NL) The breakdancing party pirate of CHIKARA is one of the most charismatic graduates of the CHIKARA Wrestle Factory … Wears an eye patch to the ring, but wrestles without it … Forms Knight Eye for the Pirate Guy with partner Lance Steel … His super prawn hold from the top rope is a crushing pinning combination … Sometimes accompanied to the ring by his parrot, El Hijo del Frankie—we kid you not … Has wrestled for CZW, FNW, CWF, and several other promotions … His finishing move is a running tomakaze he calls—you guessed it—the walk the plank.

454 CHARLES MERCURY (5'7", 188, 3, NL) It's a good thing Kerry Von Erich's not around to see Mercury billing himself as "The Modern Day Warrior" … Won the Revolution Pro tag team championship with Bigg E. Biggz in August 2004 … A solid submission wrestler, Mercury likes to use the Texas cloverleaf or the cross-armbreaker to beat opponents … Competed in Revolution Pro's first steel cage match … Scored a fall over El Generico in a championship gauntlet match in Pro Wrestling WAR … Previously wrestled as El Gallinero IV.

455 TOMMY SUEDE (5'11", 218, 7, 481) A mainstay in WXW, in which he's wrestled since his debut … A company man, he has held every title in WXW at least once … Has toured such exotic places as Korea, Japan, Honduras, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, Okinawa, and Hawaii … Also wrestled in 3PW, the Heritage Wrestling Alliance, and ACW Pro Wrestling in Germany … Has appeared in WWE dark matches, most notably against Gene Snitsky … Feuded with Homicide in WXW at the beginning of the year and eventually defeated him in a steel cage match.

456 GUTTER (6', 232, 8, 468) Does anyone else hear those voices? Nope, they're all in Gutter's head … Formerly accompanied to the ring by an actual gutter he called Cindy … A graduate of the Can-Am Wrestling School … Currently chasing the BCW tag title with partner Tyson Dux … Gutter is also a former Douglas Chevalier Memorial battle royal winner and has held the MWA and NWA Great Lakes heavyweight titles … Previously teamed with Hacker in BCW … Finisher is the Diamond Gutter … Stocky build and broad chest give him great upper body strength for his size.

457 MARCUS DILLON (6'2", 285, 6, NL) One-half of the current NWA Florida tag team champions "Double Deuce" with partner Frankie Capone … Dillon and Capone won those belts from Mikey Batts and Jerrelle Clarke last October … Dillon completed two tours of the United Kingdom for the Extreme World Warfare promotion … Appeared on *Impact* against 3 Live Kru and had one WWE dark match while training under Dory Funk Jr. … Wins most of his matches with either his forcible entry bow-and-arrow or the B.O.C. (a spear followed by an F-5 from Capone).

458 DANGER (6'4", 333, 10, 493) The man-mountain from "Bigsville, U.S.A." has gotten even bigger, adding almost 10 pounds since last year … Usually competes in the Northeast, but has also wrestled on a tour of South Africa … The current World of Hurt heavyweight champion … An extremely decorated veteran who has won scores of regional titles … Destroys opponents with his suffocation devastation, a double-handed choke-slam … Nicknames include "The Albino Rhino," "The One-Ton Human Wrecking Machine," and "The Largest Man On The Planet" … Has appeared on *Smackdown* and *Velocity* as Dave DeGeorge … Finally fired manager Kenny Cassanova … Donned a hood as The Masked Scorpion and beat The Texas Outlaw for the WOHW title.

459 DARON SMYTHE (6'1", 218, 6, NL) "The Pride Of West Virginia" has been winning titles all over the place over the past year, including the BDW heavyweight title, ICW U.S. tag title (with Dash Bennett), the XWF heavyweight title, the NWA-PWX brass knuckles title, and the CWF tag title (with Devin Devine) … Toured Florida after losing a loser-leaves-town match to Nikita Allanov in NWA-PWX, but was reinstated to the company a few months later … Turned against partner Bennett at the NWA-PWX 10th anniversary card, joining The Youth Movement … Watch out for Smythe's jumping Yakuza kick and hypnocrusher (a hiptoss into a brainbuster from the top rope.)

460 LESLIE LEATHERMAN (6'4", 335, 6, NL) Recaptured the National Wrestling League title from Headshrinker Samu and has defended the belt against Road Warrior Animal, Gangrel, John Rambo, and Nikolai Volkoff … Won a 40-man Lord of the Rings Tournament, beating Gutterboy in a falls-count-anywhere match in the finals … Also the reigning KYDA heavyweight champion … Feuding with King Kong Bundy and The Patriot in several East Coast promotions … Teams with Jake Davis as The Highwaymen and Dorian Deville as Monsters Inc. … Known as Private Twinky in Far North Wrestling and "Hulks up" during matches by munching on junk food.

451-470

461 MISTER ZERO (5'7", 205, 3, 499) A cult favorite in CHIKARA … A masked middle-aged business tyrant hailing from "Cubicle City" … Known to bring his commuter mug full of coffee and the morning paper to the ring with him … Teams with Shane Storm as Men at Work … Had the most intense bout of his career at the 2005 Tag World Grand Prix Tournament, where he and Storm were beaten to bloody pulps by Madman Pondo and Necro Butcher … Likes to put opponents away with his last shaven unicorn drop.

462 QUINTEN LEE (6'2", 224, 3, 487) "High IQ" became the Heartland Wrestling Association TV champion for a record-setting third time when he defeated Chad Collyer … Forms the team Foreign Intelligence with partner Ala Hussein … He and Hussein are former HWA tag champs … Lee considers himself to be wrestling's smartest man, though you won't find many fans who support that claim … Favorite moves are the that's academic triple kick, the empire leg submission, and the gourdbuster.

463 ADAM BOOKER (6', 255, 3, NL) Portland, Maine, native started the year with just one goal: to make a name for himself … He's doing just that … Developed into one of the top prospects on the New England independent scene … Won the NWA New England TV title by beating Beau Douglas … Married his valet, Kristine, in May 2005 … Has feuded with Douglas, Frankie Armadillo, and Adam Hastey … Finishers include the top-rope elbow and the facebuster.

464 SEAN ALLEN (6'2", 251, 6, NL) Has spent most of his career to date as a tag team wrestler, pairing with Dennis Allen throughout the Southeast … Allen is a member of The Firm in NWA Sunray and is managed by Blare Rogers … His defining moment from the past year was winning a three-way match for the NWA Sunray championship … A former FWA heavyweight champion, FOW tag team and six-man champion, and Coastal Championship Wrestling tag champion with Ryan O'Reilly … Finishing move is called the psycho slam, which sounds like a meal at Denny's … A Philadelphia native.

465 FREAK NASTTY (5'11", 230, 2, NL) Freak Nastty is a "freak" in the Scott Steiner sense of the word in that his incredible physique just has to be seen to be believed … Made a transition from the world of bodybuilding into pro wrestling, thanks in part to help from his manager, E.S. Easton … A native of Wilmington, Delaware, Nastty competes in the East Coast Wrestling Association and Chaotic Wrestling … Rapidly learning some of the tricks of the trade, and once he does, he'll be a dangerous force.

466 DARKNESS CRABTREE (5'10", 204, 62, NL) Claims to be the oldest active wrestler at 83, but Crabtree is really just a young liar … His slow, ambling ring entrances often last longer than his matches … Also claims to have wrestled a 23-hour bout against fellow CHIKARA wrestler Lance Steel … More lies … Allegedly suffered a series of mild heart attacks during a tag match last February … Sometimes gets a burst of energy after chugging some of his prescription medications … Favorite moves include the Stone Age stunner and the sweatergree.

467 JACK THRILLER (5'8", 190, 6, 472) Trained by former NWA and UFC champion Dan Severn in the art of compression submission … Became the first Price of Glory grand champion in June 2004 … Was one of eight wrestlers to be selected to compete in the October 2004 Price of Glory Tournament, in which he beat Gutter and Jimmy Jacobs before falling to Shark Boy in the finals … Successfully toured the United Kingdom, scoring wins over C.J. Otis and Paul Vault … Embraced by the fans after renouncing his rulebreaking ways … Teams with Johnny Dynamo as The Wild Stallions … If only their first names were Bill and Ted, that would truly be excellent.

468 DEXTER POINDEXTER (5'1", 165, 3, NL) Claims to hail from "Study Hall," but where else would you expect someone named Dexter Poindexter to come from? … Has wrestled in several promotions from Georgia to Connecticut in the past year … Has also taken on tougher competition, including Caprice Coleman, Ricky Landell, and New Japan's Giant Machine … Also wrestles as T.J. Mack, though fans don't know T.J. and Dexter are the same guy … Well, now they do … Teams with his brother, Kirby (also known as Krazy K), throughout the Carolinas as Team Macktion … Missed two months after surgery, but has recovered better than anyone could have expected … His finisher, a version of the sliced bread #2, is called the A+.

469 KEVIN GRACE (5'10", 175, 4, NL) The third member of The All-Knighters along with senior members Robin Knightwing and Joey Knight … The All-Knighters have been invoking the Freebird rule and allowing any two members to team—and defend titles—under that name … Grace is extremely popular with the female fans and is known for his outrageous entrances and dance routines … Was forced to go on his own when Knightwing and Knight relocated to OVW … The current FNW cruiserweight champion and Empire State Wrestling Interstate champion … Has scored wins over Hallowicked and Eric Everlast in recent months … Once competed under the name Hobo Jim just for kicks.

470 JOSH CODY (5'9", 185, 5, NL) "Cut Throat" Cody has been wrestling professionally since the tender age of 13, which means he has five years of experience even though he's only 18 … Held the Championship Wrestling tag belts with Super Destroyer as Cruel Intentions … Took a chop and a deep armdrag from Rick Steamboat last fall … Even though it hurt, Cody was smiling on the inside … Had major surgery to remove a herniated disk from his back in January, but was back in the ring weeks later for a tag team ladder match … Uses a double springboard 450 splash that he calls motion sickness as his finisher.

PWI 500

471 SHAWN COOK (6', 200, 6, NL) "Sexy" Shawn is considered one of the premier talents in the Midwest, regularly competing for Midwest Regional Wrestling and several other promotions … Is one of the top contenders to the MRW title … Teams with Donny Idol and is pursuing the MRW tag title … Held the Central Wrestling Federation title for most of the past year and successfully defended that belt against Colt Cabana, Koko B. Ware, Johnny Grunge, C.W. Anderson, Rick Morton, and Tracey Smothers … Managed by J.T. Brannum in MRW and is part of Brannum's EGO stable.

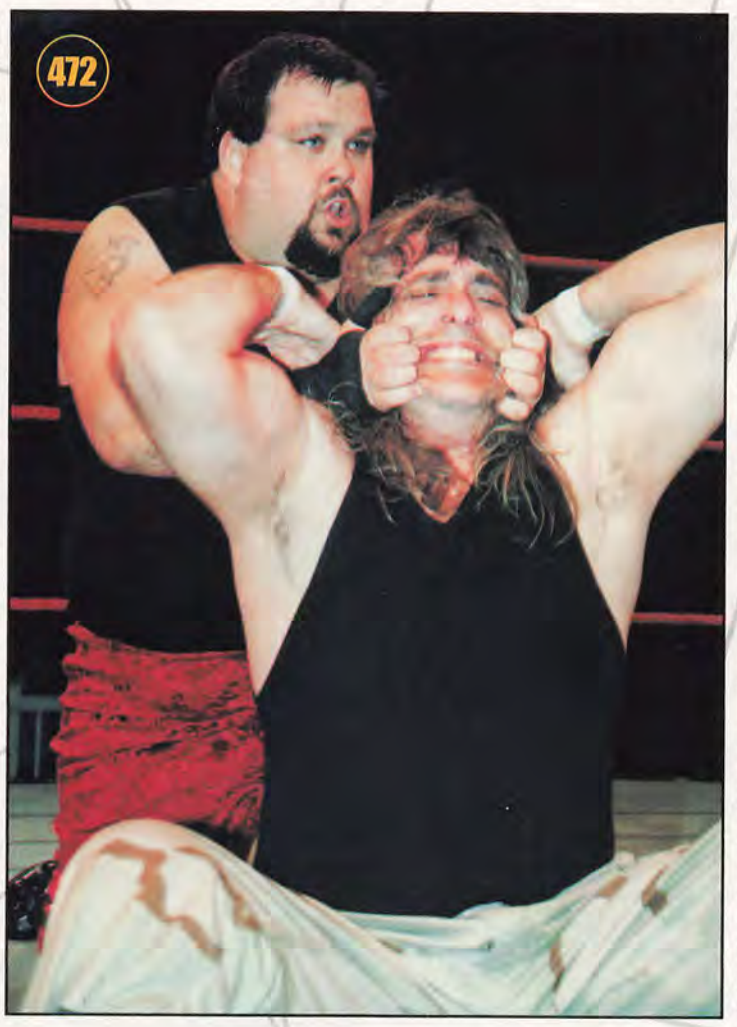
472 SHORTY SMALLS (5'7", 210, 10, NL) The redundantly named Shorty Smalls is a staple in the NWL and House of Pain Wrestling Federation … Held the NWL tag title with Deuce Donatelli and the NWL/HOPWF hardcore title … Competes around Pennsylvania, Maryland, and West Virginia … Did well at an OVW tryout camp and was asked to return in the future … Managed by Kacee Carlisle … Last appeared in the "500" in 2003 in the 405 spot … Usually uses a frog splash as his finishing move … Feuding with the horror show named Chuckie Manson.

473 TONY GOLDEN (6'1", 255, 12, NL) Golden is making his seventh appearance in the "500" since his debut in 1993 … Spent the first 10 years of his career wrestling in South Florida independents, then moved to West Virginia in 2003 … Has had a tumultuous relationship with "Luscious" Lance Malinowski, with whom Golden has held the Mason-Dixon tag team title and also feuded over that promotion's Southern championship.

474 NOVA CAIN (6'2", 300, 6, NL) Returned to the ring last September after missing eight months of action after surgery … Home promotion is Northern Championship Wrestling in Montreal … Got his revenge on Binovich Fournaov, the man who injured him, and put the Russian out of action for two months with a sickening piledriver … Has only been pinned twice since making his return and remained undefeated in singles matches for more than seven months … Last ranked in the "*PWI* 500" in 2003 … Relies on the Nova driver and his TKO to end matches.

475 BRIAN DANZIG (5'11", 235, 11, NL) Veteran brawler hails from "The Dark Side" … Finishing move is the viledriver … Currently feuding with Creeping Death and War … Previously held the AIWF tag team championship with War until commissioner Matt Carter stripped War of the title for not making a title defense and handing the belt over to the returning Rick Deezel … Still one of the most feared and hated competitors in the AIWF.

476 TERRY ALAN (5'8", 203, 12, 484) Veteran Kentucky-based grappler has shown he is willing to do whatever it takes to win … His wild feud with Maddawg included a shot glass match, a no-cheat match, a dog food match, and plenty of streetfights … How's that for old school? … A former Mid-South Wrestler of the Year … Has faced several legendary Southern wrestlers, including Jimmy Valiant, Buddy Landell, and Rick Morton …



Finishing move is a spinning DDT … Is still most proud of his win over one of his childhood heroes, Bill Dundee.

477 POWERHOUSE HUGHES (6'5", 275, 8, NL) When you're dealing with Powerhouse Hughes, you certainly get truth in advertising … One of the most popular independent wrestlers in Pittsburgh history … A former CWF heavyweight and Keystone champion, Hughes has feuded with Lord Zoltan and teamed with Eric Lancy to win the CWF tag belts during the past year … Also feuded with legendary veterans like Kamala, The Honky Tonk Man, and Devin Devine … Finisher is the 'house bomb … Has been slightly hampered by a nagging back injury.

478 VIPER (5'10", 175, 1, NL) Very little is known about this mysterious masked man from the Heartland Wrestling Association … Says he hails from the Master Chin Zin Dojo … A master of the martial arts, Viper is never without his trusty nunchakus … It is said that the man behind the mask is a former U.S. Marine … A win over Matt Stryker put the rookie on the map … Viper is extremely quick and strikes with precision kicks and attacks, much like his namesake.

479 ULTRAMANTIS BLACK (6', 206, 3, NL) A former *technico*, this CHIKARA wrestler turned against partner Mister ZERO last year and became a *rudo* … Now teaming with Hallowicked as Dark Breed … Missed some time last year due to a meddlesome back injury … Has competed throughout the U.S. for CZW, LXW, and CCW, and for Canada's Internet Wrestling Syndicate … A wild match against veteran Tracey Smothers was a huge learning experience for Ultramantis … Likes to work from the butterfly—or double-underhook—position and can move into several submission holds and suplex variations from that stance … Favorite moves include the Tiger driver and the reverse S.T.O.

480 BRUISER GRAHAM (5'10", 265, 10, 488) The self-proclaimed "best-kept secret in independent wrestling" … Does that mean there are better-kept secrets in WWE? … Recently captured his third Bruiser Wrestling Federation tag title with his third different partner … Also won the newly formed CWA's heavyweight title … Won a 20-man battle royal to win the Jimmy Valiant Tribute Cup trophy in May … Occasionally managed by Valiant, so his win was appropriate … Recently began competing in New Age Wrestling in Virginia and Pro Wrestling Entertainment in Pennsylvania … Boasts impressive grappling skills and good agility for a rather big man.

471-490

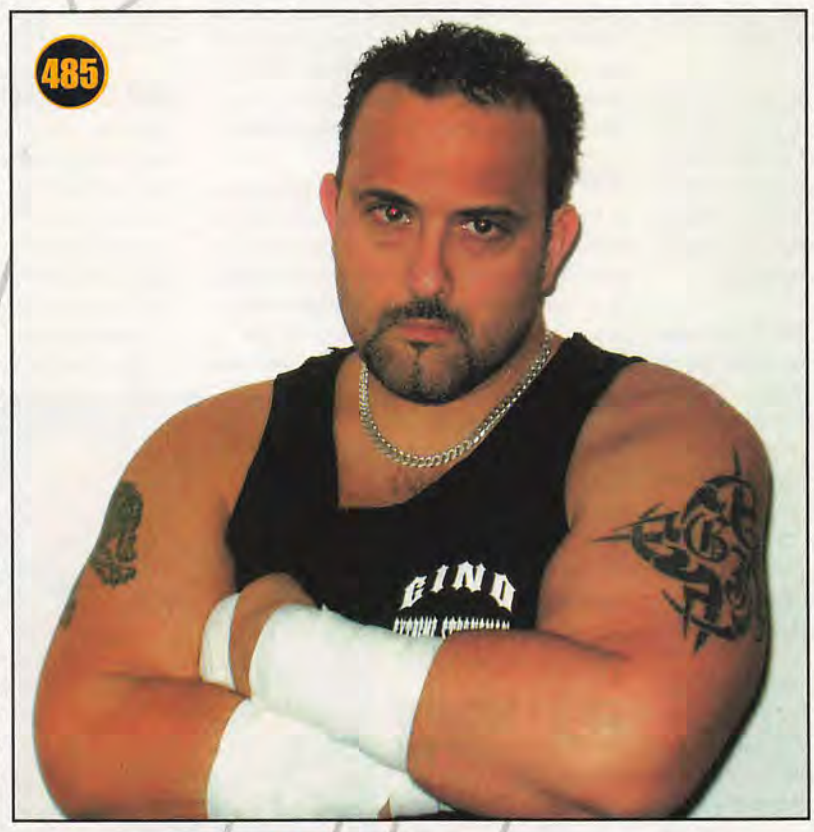
481 HELLCAT (5'9", 202, 8, NL) Western New York veteran is the owner of NWA Upstate and the leader of the promotion's top heel faction, The Osawa Syndicate ... Hellcat's career has been marked by injuries, as a third spinal surgery put him on the shelf for six months ... Returned from that career-threatening surgery to beat rival Triple X in a no-DQ match in February ... Signature moves include the Hell raiser (a sitout pedigree) and his 4:20 headbutt ... Hellcat says he's just finishing up some old business before retiring once and for all and building NWA Upstate into a premier promotion ... A wily veteran capable of doing anything to get what he wants.

482 RIC GUNNER (5'9", 185, 9, NL) "The Shooting Star" has been embroiled in a violent feud with Black Rain and his Black Carnival ... Suffered a badly injured ankle before his match against the HCW British champion "Lord" Sebastian Valmont, courtesy of Black Rain ... One of the most popular wrestlers in HCW, where he's held every title ... Teaming with Shane Matthews in an effort to take the tag belts away from Black Rain and Mason the Mangler.

483 PHIL ATLAS (5'9", 202, 2, NL) Windsor, Ontario, native is one of the most recent graduates of Scott D'Amore's Can-Am Wrestling School ... Recently started teaming with "The Barbaric Berzerker" Jimmy Jacobs in Border City Wrestling ... Also competes throughout Michigan ... Not the biggest wrestler, but quite strong for his size ... Shows promise with impressive chain wrestling skills and mat wrestling ... Should gain more confidence and seasoning as the years progress ... Learning a lot from his more experienced partner.

484 FORSAKEN (5'9", 187, 6, 489) Alabama-based competitor scored a big win over Jimmy Rave in a four-way elimination match last June ... Has held the tag team title in Dory Funk Jr.'s BANG TV promotion on two occasions with partner Yako Romero, a.k.a. The Freekshows of Faith ... Forsaken is also a former LAW-ICW heavyweight champion ... Appeared in NWA Wildside, challenging champion Jeremy V ... Also scored a big win over TNA competitor Jerrelle Clarke ... Main finishers are the last dream (a sky high into a sitout uranage) and the lost hope (a variation of the hangman's clutch).

485 GINO MARTINO (5'11", 275, 9, NL) "The Extreme Strongman" has been training with The Iron Sheik to perfect his camel clutch ... In a bit of old school flair, Martino has offered a $5,000 headbutt challenge to show he has the hardest head in all of professional wrestling ... Complements his power wrestling style with hardcore tactics and is known for competing in matches involving copious amounts of thumbtacks, barbed wire, and fire ... Joined with Ox Baker's Army of Kamala and The Executioner to face Todd Hanson, "Cowboy" Bob Orton, and Beau Douglas ... Though Executioner was pinned, Martino was blamed for the loss and was booted from Ox's Army ... Preparing to return to the MWF with the knowledge he has gotten from his time with the Sheik.



486 JOHN CABBIE (6'1", 210, 3, NL) The man from Heaven's Gate, California, is a frequent tag team partner of Greg Spitz ... Well-traveled newcomer has competed in several Northeast indy promotions, including WXW, PWE, and SAW ... Also competes as Bishop ... Had a career highlight his past year when he faced one of wrestling's great madmen of yesteryear, The Missing Link ... Won the WXW tag team title with Spitz ... Has been managed by the elitist snob Saul Steinberk.

487 GOTTI (6'1", 238, 8, NL) Also known as "The Other Dark Meat," which is just a disturbing nickname ... Regularly competes for the Heartland Wrestling Association ... A former HWA TV champion, Gotti is also a member of the HWA broadcast team ... A natural talker with equal parts arrogance and charisma to go along with his verbal skill ... His motto is "It's good to be Gotti," and he would know ... Hails from Raleigh, North Carolina ... Had a major feud with "Two Face" Sammie Carrelli, which just sounds like a *Sopranos* episode summary.

488 WILL CHRISTIANSON (5'8", 185, 4, NL) Incredible work ethic and attitude have made "Mastiff" a rising star in Western New York and Southern Ontario ... Feuded with the arrogant Jonny Puma throughout 2003 in Empire State Wrestling ... Beat Puma for the ESW heavyweight title and successfully defended it against Cody Steele, Chris Cooper, and others before losing the belt back to Puma in August 2004 ... Also competes in Ontario's Neo Spirit Pro Wrestling and NWA Upstate ... Was personally selected by Scott D'Amore from a field of more than 25 indy prospects to compete in a six-man "futures" match that also included Jay Lethal, Petey Williams, and Roderick Strong at Ballpark Brawl 4 in Buffalo in July 2005.

489 JIMMY CASH (6', 252, 7, NL) Power-based veteran based out of New World Wrestling ... Also has appeared in ROH and Chaotic Wrestling... Combines brute strength with mat wrestling skills and submission holds ... A favorite of the ladies because of his "jacked" physique ... Teams with "Big" Paulie Gilmore as The Men of Business ... Cash and Gilmore hold the NWW tag title ... Has all the physical tools to go places in the sport.

490 BRIAN COSTELLO (6', 245, 23, NL) The veteran returns to the "500" after missing the cut last year ... Costello boasts that he has "just broken Bruno Sammartino's record as longest-running champion," as he has held the IAW heavyweight title for nearly eight full years now ... Somehow, we don't think Costello is going to make us forget about Bruno ... Has had wild feuds with Terry Funk and The Barbarian ... Over the course of his career, Costello has competed in the WWF, WCW, AWA, and All-Japan ... Still known for breaking Paul Roma's neck and a countout win over Andre the Giant ... A cagey veteran with an impressive resume.

PWI 500

491-500

491 TOY DODSON (5'11", 215, 9, NL) "The Pro" was out of action for five months with a back injury ... Made a big comeback in 2005, calling out several rookies who he felt were getting far too arrogant for their own good ... Currently feuding with former partner Adam Jacobs ... He and Jacobs have had an on-again/off-again relationship since 1996, when Dodson teamed with Jacobs in his first match ... An eight-time Tri-Star tag team champion, three-time heavyweight champion, and six-time junior champion ... Calls his devastating superkick "The Ticket To Toyland" ... Last ranked in the "500" in 1999 at number 407 ... Managed by R.J. Slater.

492 BROTHER CLAY (6'4", 245, 3, NL) The God-fearing big man from Resurrection, Alabama, shocked his fans by turning his back on them—and on the Good Book ... Helped eradicate The Black Militia from the Heartland Wrestling Association ... Teamed with Matt Dillinger as Southern Breeze ... A powerful competitor blessed with great size and strength.

493 ERIC DRAVEN (6'1", 199, 3, NL) Draven made his pro debut against Madman Pondo, winning by DQ ... Talk about a baptism of fire ... Held the AWA Supreme U.S. title for eight months before dropping the belt to Nick Noble ... A three-time AWA Supreme tag champion with Spazz ... Greatest moment of the past year was teaming with Koko B. Ware to beat The Blackhearts in October 2004 ... Often managed by "Stylin'" Stacy Starr ... Competes throughout Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio ... Signature moves are his Seattle sidekick and moonsault.

494 AARON DEVIL (6'2", 252, 4, NL) Managed by the mysterious Dark Angel ... Devil is a two-time WCEW hardcore champion and two-time WCEW tag champion, winning gold with both D.J. P Roc and Charlie Dreamer ... He turned against both partners after losing the belts, which just goes to show you can't trust a guy named Devil ... Spent much of the past year feuding with The Stro, Ouga Bouga, Justin Feeche, and Ali Steele ... Teamed with Eddie Brown in a loss to Rick Morton and Draven at ACPW's legends card ... Competes almost exclusively on the North Carolina indy circuit ... Is part of The New Era Thugs with Feeche and Zane Dawson.

495 DAMIAN DRAGON (5'8", 185, 8, NL) A former karate instructor, "Disturbed" Damian got his start by training at Johnny Rodz' School of Wrestling ... Home promotion is NYWC, but Dragon also competes throughout New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Florida ... Signature move is his Route 666 version of the sliced bread #2 ... Learned the art of rulebreaking when he was managed by Gangrel, who paired him with Jai Kronic as Projekt 13 ... Now managed by Foxxy Dreams ... Suffered a severe neck stinger that has left him with occasional numbness in his right arm, but Dragon refuses to take time off from the ring ... Style is a mixture of old-fashioned brawling, martial arts attacks, grappling, and Lucha Libre-styled high-flying ... Has held the AWA lightweight, UWZ cruiserweight, and IHPW tag titles.

496 LORD ZOLTAN (6', 222, 27, NL) The bizarre Lord Zoltan is approaching his third decade in the sport ... Hails from Bourbon Street in New Orleans ... A mainstay in the Pittsburgh, Ohio, and West Virginia area, Zoltan has competed just about everywhere at one point or another ... Always demands that promoters let him wrestle first on the card, and promoters always allow it, as they usually want to get him out of the building as quickly as possible ... Wears freakish black and white face paint ... Claims to be the FNW junior heavyweight champion, but FNW recognizes no such title ... Known for his high-flying, high-impact offense.

497 J.V. INSANITY (5'10", 190, 5, NL) Claims to hail from The Dead Zone, but we can't seem to locate that on a map ... Insanity was trained by Jimmy Valiant, a man many would say knows insanity as well as anyone ... Feuded with Jason Kincaid, Jason Lancaster, and Scotty McKeever this year ... Insanity has been competing throughout West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky ... Tested himself against his strongest competition to date this year, facing Jack Black (formerly known as Mr. Black in OVW) and Brad Batten of The Batten Twins ... Finisher is the dizzy spell, a spinning X-Factor variation.

498 C.J. SUMMERS (5'9", 205, 11, NL) "The American Rock Star" has been competing in several promotions in the U.S. and has made three tours of Ireland, courtesy of Irish Whip Wrestling ... Has been embroiled in a feud with Della Morte and Morte's evil minions, The Darkness ... Regained the ACWA heavyweight title after connecting with an incredible split-legged moonsault from 15 feet above the ring, making Summers a three-time ACWA champ ... A native of Seaside Heights, New Jersey.

499 BERT WILLIAMS (5'9", 145, 4, NL) Actually likes the nickname "Buttery" ... Only in a promotion with manager/karaoke king Kenny Cassanova could a man who covers himself in butter become a star ... Hailing from "The Land o' Lakes Valley of Troy, New York," Bert is known as "The Duke Of Dairy Products" ... Coats his body and hair with massive amounts of butter spray ... Espouses the philosophy that wrestling is all about gimmicks ... Has battled his trainer, Thornn, through four states now ... Bert is a three-time World of Hurt cruiserweight champion and former WOH heavyweight champion ... Featured in a series of "Loser Kisses 'Buttery' Bert" bouts ... Inexplicably, Synddy Synn threw a match just to get a chance to kiss Bert.

500 NICK NEMETH (6', 210, 1, NL) One of the resident young lions in Ohio Valley Wrestling ... Recently signed a WWE developmental contract ... Uses a version of the stunner as his primary finishing move, but also uses a version of the RKO ... A very popular competitor, Nemeth is in the midst of a lengthy feud with Ken Doane ... Both men have had great things predicted for them by OVW observers ... Recently changed his look by shaving his head ... Occasionally teams with Chet the Jet.

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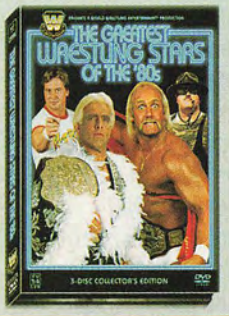

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FAREWELL TO THE 500

The list of active wrestlers is always changing. Since last year's "*PWI* 500" was published, some wrestlers have migrated to different federations or changed their names. Others are now injured, inactive, or retired. Still others have been dropped from this year's survey for other reasons.

Keys are as follows (D) deceased; (DL) disabled list throughout a major portion of the year; (I) inactive; (NC) name change; (NL) not listed; (R) retired.

Bob Sapp (NL)
Buh Buh Ray Dudley (NL)
Matt Hardy (NL)
D-Von Dudley (NL)
Shinya Hashimoto (D)
Goldberg (NL)
Rico (R)
Luther Reigns (NL)
Essa Rios (NC)
Shinjiro Otani (NL)
Mordecai (NC)
Naoya Ogawa (NL)
Perro Aguayo Jr. (NL)
Test (NL)
A-Train (NC)
Heat (NC)
Jerry Lynn (DL)
Johnny Stamboli (NL)
Chavo Classic (NL)
Octagon (NL)
Mascara Sagrada (NL)
Al Snow (NL)
Yoshihiro Takayama (NL)
Sakoda (NL)
Sabu (NL)
Black Tiger (NL)
Joey Matthews (NC)
Damien 666 (NL)
Halloween (NL)
Glen Gilberti (NL)
Shane Douglas (R)
Takehiro Murahama (NL)
Johnny Devine (DL)
Heavy Metal (NL)
New Jack (NL)
Scoot Andrews (R)
Johnny Storm (NL)
Ikuto Hidaka (NL)
Dan Maff (R)
Jason Cross (NL)
Rey Misterio Sr. (NL)
Lex Lovett (R)
Justin Credible (NL)

Dusty Rhodes Jr. (NL)
Bobby Quance (NL)
Judo Suwa (NL)
James Tighe (NL)
Yossino (NL)
Billy Fives (R)
Mike Sullivan (R)
Lamont (I)
Riki Choshu (NL)
Jimmy Vegas (NL)
Chad Wicks (NC)
Sumo Fuji (NL)
Todd Sexton (NL)
Fast Eddie (NL)
DeVito (NL)
Iceberg (NL)
Dallas (NC)
H.C. Loc (NL)
Otto Schwanz (NL)
Jacey North (NL)
Gabriel (NL)
Slash (NL)
Tom Brandi (NL)
Rico Casanova (NL)
Azarael (NL)
Aaron Aguilera (NL)
Kohei Sato (NL)
Taru (NL)
Ryan Boz (NL)
Zebra Kid (NL)
Gran Naniwa (NL)
Tank (NL)
Savio Vega (NL)
Mike Barton (NL)
Evan Karagias (NL)
Altar Boy Luke (NL)
Jorge Estrada (NL)
Afa Jr. (I)
Jason the Legend (NL)
Yoshihito Sasaki (NL)
Blade Boudreaux (NL)
Buff Bagwell (NL)
Adam Windsor (NL)

Nate Webb (NL)
Chris Candido (D)
Murder 1 (NL)
Jimmy Snuka Jr. (NC)
Chris Hero (NL)
Mike Bell (NL)
Rainman (NL)
Mark Bell (NL)
Brandon K (NL)
Justice (NL)
Sinn (NL)
Standing Thunder (NL)
Rapid Fire Maldonado (R)
Mike Taylor (NL)
Reno (NL)
Eric Priest (NL)
Jack Xavier (NL)
Rob Begley (NC)
Brock Singleton (NL)
Gillberg (NL)
Mike the Miz (NL)
Ace Darling (NL)
Jardi Frantz (NL)
T.J. Powers (NL)
Caprice Coleman (NL)
Johnny the Body (NL)
Eddie Brown (NL)
Johnny Ova (NL)
Scott Savage (NL)
Matt Sydal (NL)
Bart Blaxon (NL)
Shawn Donavan (NL)
Jeremy V (NL)
J.C. Bailey (NL)
Scott Phoenix (NL)
K.C. Blade (DL)
Jacob Ladder (NL)
Major Hardway (NL)
Sal Rinauro (NL)
Oman Tortuga (NL)
Eddie Atlas (NL)
Mikey Tenderfoot (NL)
Robert Thompson (NL)

The Hacker (NL)
Bob Evans (NL)
Michael Sain (NL)
Diablo Santiago (NL)
Biohazard (NL)
Phantom Lord Spiro (NL)
Ryan Drago (NL)
Rob McBride (NL)
T.J. Dalton (NL)
Eric Xtasy (NL)
Flex Fenom (NL)
The Bruiser (NL)
Magic (NL)
Jeromy Sage (NL)
Suba (NL)
Robbie Ellis (NL)
Major DeBeers (NL)
Boyce Legrand (NL)
Don Brodie (NL)
Slim J (NL)
Roughouse Rivera (I)
Joseph (NL)
Rod Bell (NL)
BAM (NL)
Billy Black (NL)
Vince Vicallo (NL)
J.T. Stahr (NL)
Shadow Jackson (NL)
Tejas (NL)
El Tornado (NL)
Scab (NL)
Xero (I)
Dave Swift (NL)
Enigma (R)
Bulldog Raines (NL)
Brandon P (NL)
Lil' Cholo (NL)
Seth Delay (NL)
Shane Shadows (NL)
Vennis DeMarco (NL)

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471 Shawn Cook
113 Steve Corino
490 Brian Costello
466 Darkness Crabtree
391 Crazy J
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215 Scott D'Amore
388 Brent Dail
125 Khosrow Daivari
458 Danger
17 Christopher Daniels
192 Danny Daniels
203 Josh Daniels
475 Brian Danzig
386 Sebastian Dark
271 Webster Dauphiney
348 Robbie Dawber
88 Simon Dean
337 Vik Delicious
372 Delirious
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418 Chase Del Monte
296 Steve DeMarco
494 Aaron Devil
383 Diabolico
247 Diamante
185 Simon Diamond
457 Marcus Dillon
187 Julio Dinero
307 Ken Doan
491 Toy Dodson
387 Shirley Doe

332 Danny Doring
96 Andy Douglas
214 Dr. X
495 Damian Dragon
209 Ultimo Dragon
228 Dragon Kid
493 Eric Draven
260 D-Ray 3000
87 Spike Dudley
285 Kevin Dunn
117 Rene Dupree
121 Sonjay Dutt
201 Tyson Dux
313 Rob Eckos
8 Edge
172 Elektro
56 Eugene
193 Jack Evans
435 Eric Everlast
220 Felino
316 Adam Firestorm
51 Ric Flair
368 Tim Flowers
413 Mozart Fontaine
484 Forsaken
336 Rory Fox
310 Mike Foxx
450 Franky the Mobster
261 Minoru Fujita
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47 Hector Garza
397 Scotty Gash
181 Gedo
100 James Gibson
419 Tony Givens
194 Glamor Boy Shane
473 Tony Golden
183 Ray Gonzalez
293 Ray Gordy
487 Gotti
342 Zach Gowen
469 Kevin Grace
443 Johnny Graham
480 Bruiser Graham
264 Gran Apolo
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408 Supreme Lee Great
325 Dennis Gregory
94 Sylvan Grenier
399 Eddie Guapo
126 Juventud Guerrera
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15 Eddie Guerrero
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482 Ric Gunner
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68 Charlie Haas
439 Snatch Haggis
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273 Chris Hamrick
448 Handsome Johnny
58 Jeff Hardy
67 Chris Harris

300 Teddy Hart
33 Muhammad Hassan
246 Cody Hawk
73 Kaz Hayashi
221 Heavy Metal
89 Heidenreich
481 Hellcat
351 Super Hentai
198 Hotstuff Hernandez
24 El Hijo Del Santo
78 Hardcore Holly
158 Homicide
281 Tom Howard
156 Lance Hoyt
344 Hangman Hughes
477 Powerhouse Hughes
291 Human Tornado
436 Larry Huntley
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424 P.T. Hussla
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356 Aaron Idol
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151 Danny Inferno
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269 Chet Jablonski
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176 Jimmy Jacobs
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98 B.G. James
363 Japanese Pool Boy
11 Jeff Jarrett
433 J-Busta
25 Chris Jericho
97 Johnny Jeter
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118 Mark Jindrak
255 Mac Johnson
318 Cru Jones
347 Dow Jones
229 Tony Jones
86 Orlando Jordan
406 J-Rocc
292 Juggernaut
370 Apollo Kahn
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115 Kid Kash
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178 Taiyo Kea
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382 Conrad Kennedy III
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ALPHABETICAL LISTING

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16 Kenta Kobashi
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218 Jay Lethal
195 Steve Lewington
39 Jushin Liger
339 Lightning
449 J.T. Lightning
369 Bryan Logan
376 Matt Logan
36 Paul London
378 Lotus
173 Low-Ki
451 Andre Lyonz
289 Scotty Mac
345 Mace
231 Rodney Mack
328 Steve Mack
280 Steve Madison
317 Quinn Magnum
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302 Kirby Marcos
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211 Masada
251 Vinny Massaro
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299 Joel Maximo
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124 Nigel McGuinness
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440 Mega
371 Mace Mendoza
77 Mephisto
454 Charles Mercury
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34 Shawn Michaels
159 Taka Michinoku
249 Milano Collection AT
42 Mitsuharu Misawa
14 Rey Misterio Jr.
18 Mistico
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222 Mike Mondo
139 Shannon Moore
101 Donovan Morgan
54 Matt Morgan
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365 Dropkick Murphy
99 Keiji Muto
205 Yuji Nagata
234 Manabu Nakanishi
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343 Nasdaq
465 Freak Nastty
354 E.C. Negro
85 Negro Casas
367 Derrick Neikirk
500 Nick Nemeth
329 El Nene
224 Vance Nevada
102 Mr. Niebla
196 Osamu Nishimura
80 Johnny Nitro
202 Kevin Northcutt
474 Nova Cain
128 Nunzio
396 C.J. O'Doyle
405 Ryan O'Reilly
286 Onyx
373 Dru Onyx
384 Mr. Ooh La La
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423 Luis Ortiz
29 Randy Orton
425 Shawn Osborne
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208 Chuck Palumbo
238 Pantera
35 L.A. Park
250 Frank Parker
402 Shawn Patrick
301 Boomer Payne
147 Adam Pearce
352 Bam Bam Penders
324 J.J. Perez
468 Dexter Poindexter
267 Predator
438 D.J. P-Roc
223 Josh Prohibition
144 Psicosis
290 Daniel Puder
179 Puma
40 C.M. Punk
242 Mike Quackenbush
277 Quiet Storm
422 Dean Radford
257 Alastair "A-1" Ralphz
361 John Rambo
330 Chasyn Rance
140 Jimmy Rave
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263 Amazing Red
44 William Regal
177 Ricky Reyes
145 Trevor Rhodes
157 Rhino
134 Steven Richards
84 Takeshi Rikioh
163 Rikishi
360 Rockin'Rebel
453 Jolly Roger
417 Roman
146 Rocky Romero
136 Romeo Roselli
92 Rosey
346 Axl Rotten
55 Bobby Rude
314 Jason Rumble
320 Andrew Ryker
69 Chris Sabin
22 Samoa Joe
327 Fred Sampson
27 Kensuke Sasaki
245 Great Sasuke
137 Scotty Too Hotty
148 Seven
415 Sexxxy Eddie
225 Deuce Shade
294 Seth Shai
59 Michael Shane
190 Mike Shane
188 Todd Shane
119 Shark Boy
103 Alex Shelley
212 Jinsei Shinzaki
52 Shocker
169 Sonny Siaki
442 Russel Simpson
189 Skayde
61 Elix Skipper
174 Seth Skyfire
262 Babi Slymm
472 Shorty Smalls
166 Bison Smith
186 Harry Smith
459 Daron Smythe
83 Gene Snitski
431 Brian Soscia
403 George South Sr.
81 Spanky
407 Glen Spectre
411 Greg Spitz
409 Jeff Starr
322 Michelle Starr
171 Ace Steel
253 Rod Steel
349 Bruce Steele
401 Cody Steele
434 Rod Steele
120 Aaron Stevens
90 Chase Stevens
375 Devon Storm
71 James Storm
258 Striker
275 The Stro
232 Roderick Strong
333 Sedrick Strong
180 Matt Stryker
7 A.J. Styles
321 Rico Suave
455 Tommy Suede
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133 Kenzo Suzuki
165 Johnny Swinger
377 T. Rantula
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164 Tatsuhito Takaiwa
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219 Minoru Tanaka
235 Tarzan Boy
184 Akira Taue
393 Chris Taylor
252 Mike Taylor
112 Genichiro Tenryu
10 Hiroyoshi Tenzan
132 Antonio Thomas
350 Sal Thomaselli
340 Vito Thomaselli
467 Jack Thriller
282 Thunder
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355 Mike Tobin
170 Dick Togo
127 Chad Toland
114 Tank Toland
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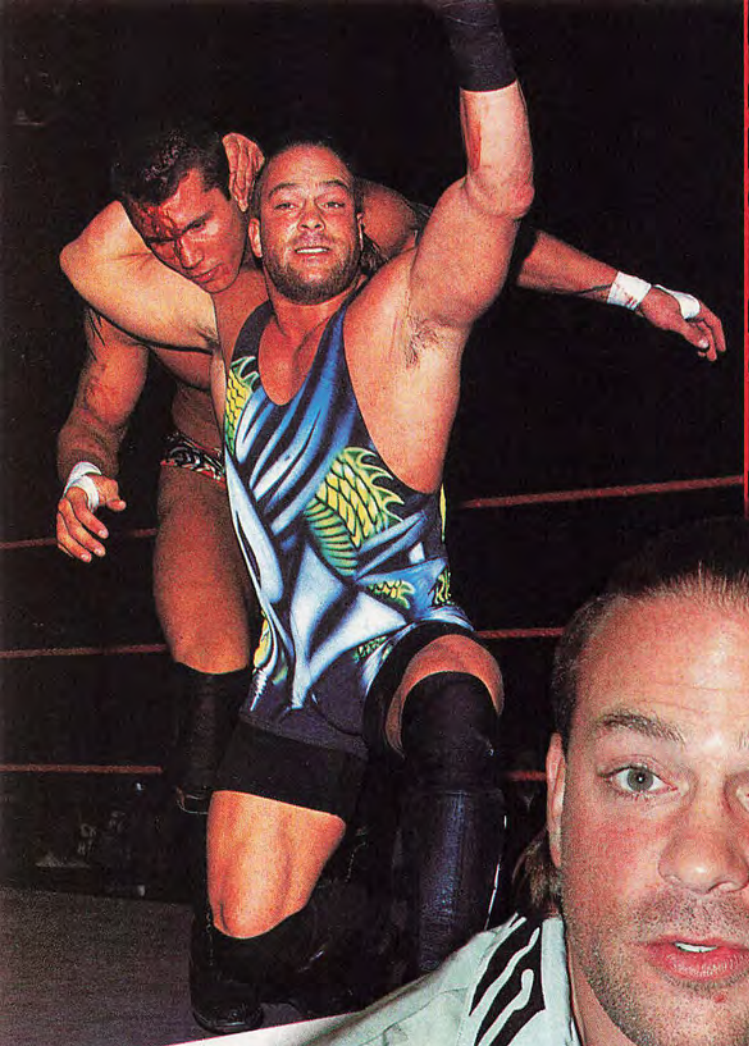
4 Triple-H
256 Turbo
479 Ultramantis Black
26 The Undertaker
385 Quinson Valentino
162 Vampiro
135 Val Venis
237 Slash Venom
478 Viper
129 Viscera
43 Dr. Wagner Jr.
295 Vordell Walker
213 John Walters
303 Tim Warcloud
207 B.J. Whitmer
499 Burt Williams
138 Doug Williams
23 Petey Williams
306 Tommy Williams
230 T.J. Wilson
357 Alyx Winters
315 Dusty Wolfe
312 Marty Wright
244 Toru Yano
259 Takashi Yoshida
199 David Young
60 Eric Young
437 Scott Zenzen
461 Mister Zero
496 Lord Zoltan



The last time RVD held a singles title in WWE was on the night Randy Orton beat him for Intercontinental title near the end of 2003. His supporters want to see him wearing gold again ... and not just I-C gold.

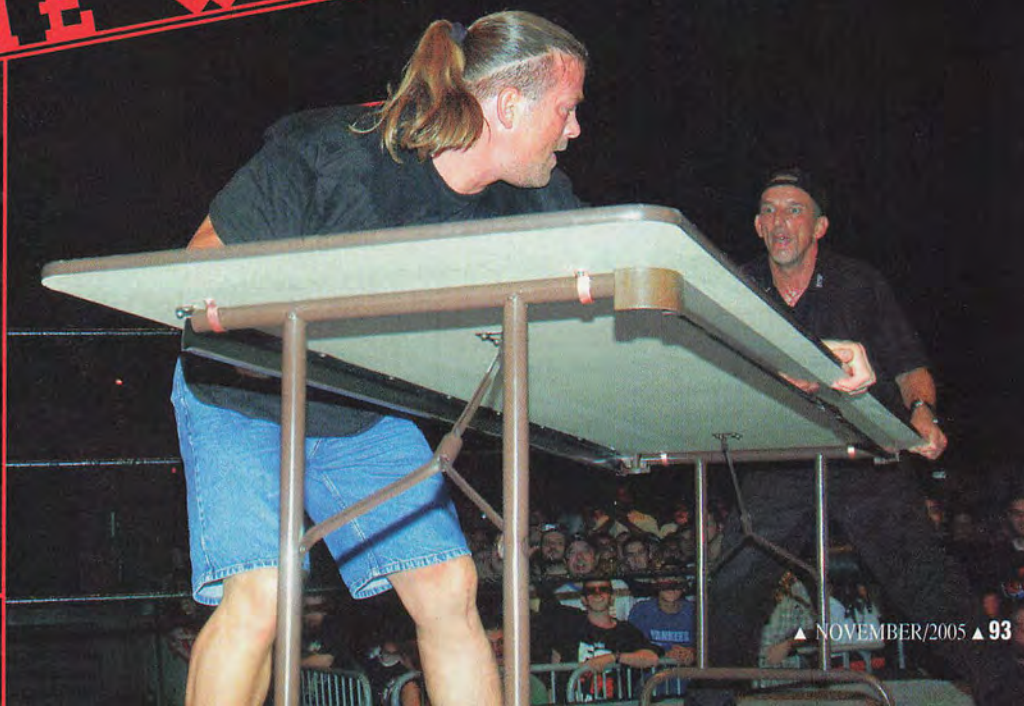
By Frank Krewda

JUST LIKE ECW—the promotion that spawned him—Rob Van Dam has built up a sizeable and vocal contingent of fans that are dedicated to all things RVD. Through his undeniable wrestling ability and willingness to shoot from the lip in the occasional politically incorrect, out-of-character interview, Van Dam has developed a reciprocal relationship with his fans: They feed off his often-brilliant performances; he feeds off their unyielding support.

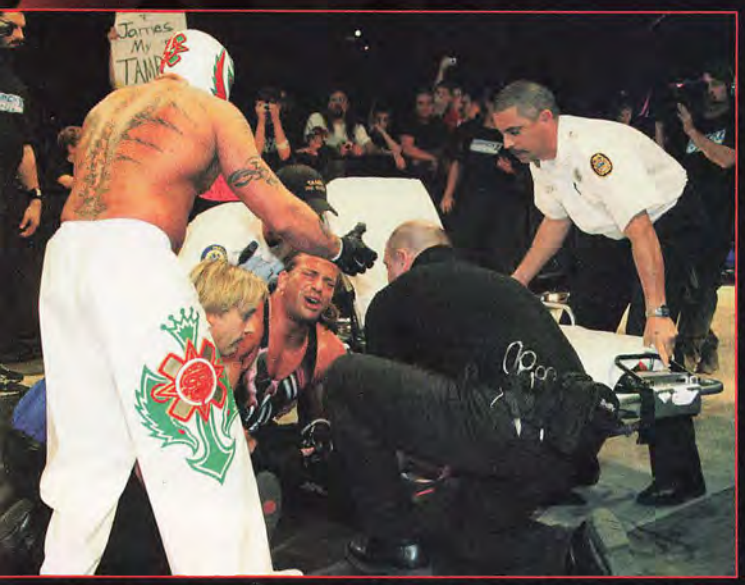
In ECW, this relationship elevated RVD to hero status. But in WWE, in which his bouts have been hemmed to shorter, more TV-friendly bites and his in-ring persona and unusual charisma all but ignored by the WWE creative team, RVD finds himself no closer to the brass ring—the World title—than he did four years ago, when he joined WWE after ECW's demise.

FIRST GUERRERO ... THEN BENOIT ...

IS RVD THE NEXT TO CASH IN HIS DUES FOR THE WWE TITLE?



RVD and ECW manager Bill Alfonso were happy to get the table and help Sabu beat Rhyno at One Night Stand. He came out of that show with more momentum than he has had in a long time.



Van Dam was in agony as he was stretchered out of the ring, his knee in dire need of surgical repair, in early-2005. But all the time away could actually have done his career some good.

No question, Van Dam understood that moving from the smaller ECW to a national and worldwide powerhouse like WWE would dim his star a bit. But nobody can fault RVD for expressing his frustration with the WWE creative team the way he did at WWE's ECW One Night Stand pay-per-view on June 12.

The short version: RVD called out WWE for keeping him under a glass ceiling for the past four years. Specifically, he's been most disappointed by the promotion's failure to develop his persona beyond a perpetually stoned slacker incapable of uttering anything other than "whatever" and "cool." The passion and fire that he's always had inside him all came spewing out within one five-minute promo.

RVD's comments were certainly well-founded. As is often the case when talent comes in from places other than WWE, the promotion didn't exactly put its full weight behind the seemingly ready-made superstar. RVD was allowed to chal-

"THERE'S NO QUESTION TO RVD LOYALISTS THAT THEIR MAN HAS THE ABILITY AND HAS PAID THE DUES REQUIRED TO WEAR ONE OF THE TWO BIG BELTS JUST LIKE GUERRERO AND BENOIT DID ... NOW, WITH ALL THE MONTHS SPENT ON THE SIDELINES RECOVERING FROM KNEE SURGERY AND THE ECW PPV GIVING HIM A BOOST, HE HAS A FRESH START AND PERHAPS A LAST SHOT AT THE **ULTIMATE GLORY** IN HIS SPORT."

Four years ago, it looked like RVD was on the fast track to becoming an elite WWE star, just as he had been *the* guy in ECW. Not just everyone battles The Rock at Survivor Series after all. Alas, it hasn't happened. That's not to say it can't yet happen.

lenge Triple-H on occasion, and before that even got cracks at the WWE World title when "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin was still on top. But his rapid descent from the upper echelon, his exclusion from WrestleMania XIX and eventual move to Smackdown seemed to suggest he wasn't considered a main event prospect. Not by those whose opinion mattered, anyway. On June 12, 2005, RVD justifiably reminded WWE of what he has to offer and of opportunities lost (thus far).

Right or not, however, forcing Vince McMahon's hand doesn't always work out as planned. Precious few wrestlers, such as Shawn Michaels and Hulk Hogan, have been able to get the results they wanted by taking on WWE head-on. So while his faithful fans cheered in support of RVD's comments on June 12, they must have dreaded the fall-out. Would Van Dam's diatribe be more likely to punch his ticket out of WWE than it would to punch it to the top of the promotion?

Early indications say not. Chances are that if RVD's remarks actually stung WWE higher-ups, he wouldn't have been given the floor on "Carlito's Cabana," during which he reiterated basically the same sentiments two weeks later. If anything, it seems WWE saw Van Dam's outburst as a means to jump-start his career. Instead of falling victim to

a round of massive job cuts that came a few weeks later, Van Dam finds himself back with Raw, where he'll most likely challenge current I-C champion Carlito Caribbean Cool for the title to start.

What's unlikely is that Van Dam and his fans will be satisfied with another Intercontinental title reign. And thanks to his salvo at One Night Stand, neither RVD nor those fans might have to settle for just I-C title reign number five.

If there's one thing Vince McMahon has perfected over the course of his career, it's having his finger on the pulse of the fans. It was the same desire to give the fans what they want that resulted in two long-overdue title reigns.

Like RVD, both Eddie Guerrero and Chris Benoit boast loyal and long-suffering fan bases. Their cheering sections made so much noise that McMahon deemed it wise for business to give each wrestler a shot at a run at the top.

So, in February 2004, Guerrero defeated Brock Lesnar at No Way Out to win the WWE title. One month later, Benoit topped Shawn Michaels and Triple-H in an instant classic at WrestleMania XX to capture the World title. Both won their titles cleanly. And as expected, both men turned in respectable runs as champions—with both lasting more than four months.

To their fans, the title reigns signified universal recognition for their abilities and the dues they paid over the course of many years. There's no question to RVD loyalists that their man has the ability and has paid the dues required to wear one of the two big belts, just as Guerrero and Benoit did. However, there were some that had given up hope on RVD ever getting a chance to be the number-one man for either Raw or Smackdown. Now, with all the months spent on the sidelines recovering from knee surgery and the ECW PPV giving him a boost, he has a fresh start and perhaps a last shot at the ultimate glory in his sport.

Still, it will take more than sharp criticism from RVD and his backers to land him into contention on Raw. Other title hopefuls are just as hungry for the belt as RVD is.

"Let RVD worry about getting healthy first," said Triple-H, who has his sight set on the same goal as Van Dam. "All the fans in the world won't make a difference until his injured leg heals up. One big elbowdrop on that gimpy leg of his and he'll have a whole lot more to worry about than getting what he thinks he deserves. Being the World champion has nothing to do with a popularity contest. I think I proved that."

One thing Van Dam won't have to worry about is amassing enough public appeal for McMahon and other WWE decision-makers to take notice. RVD has wisely invested years into fostering a special relationship with his fans. Their support could make or break his efforts to garner a major push. He has the skills, and he's paid his dues like Guerrero and Benoit before him. All he needs now is the opportunity. □

Orton should consider himself luck he's moved to Smackdown. He won't have to deal with a fired up Van Dam again (above left). When last seen competing in WWE, RVD was battling the Dudleys a lot in tag team bouts (above right). He'll be sticking to the singles ranks now if he has any say in it.

THE EXPERTS AGREE ON

SAMOA JOE:

It's Not *If* He Wins The NWA Title, It's *When*

By Jason Langin

LARRY ZBYSZKO, TNA'S director of authority couldn't help but laugh while watching a match on a monitor in the backstage area at a recent taping of *Impact* in Orlando, Florida.

It was a three-way match in which Samoa Joe, a new addition to the TNA roster, obliterated two of the top contenders to the X division championship, Shark Boy and Elix Skipper.

When asked what he found so funny about the contest, which seemed pretty serious to everyone else, especially Shark Boy and Skipper, "The Living Legend" was forthcoming. "It's almost unfair having a guy that big be that good of a fighter," he said. "It's bad enough that he's so big and strong, but to be such a skilled brawler. He's amazing."

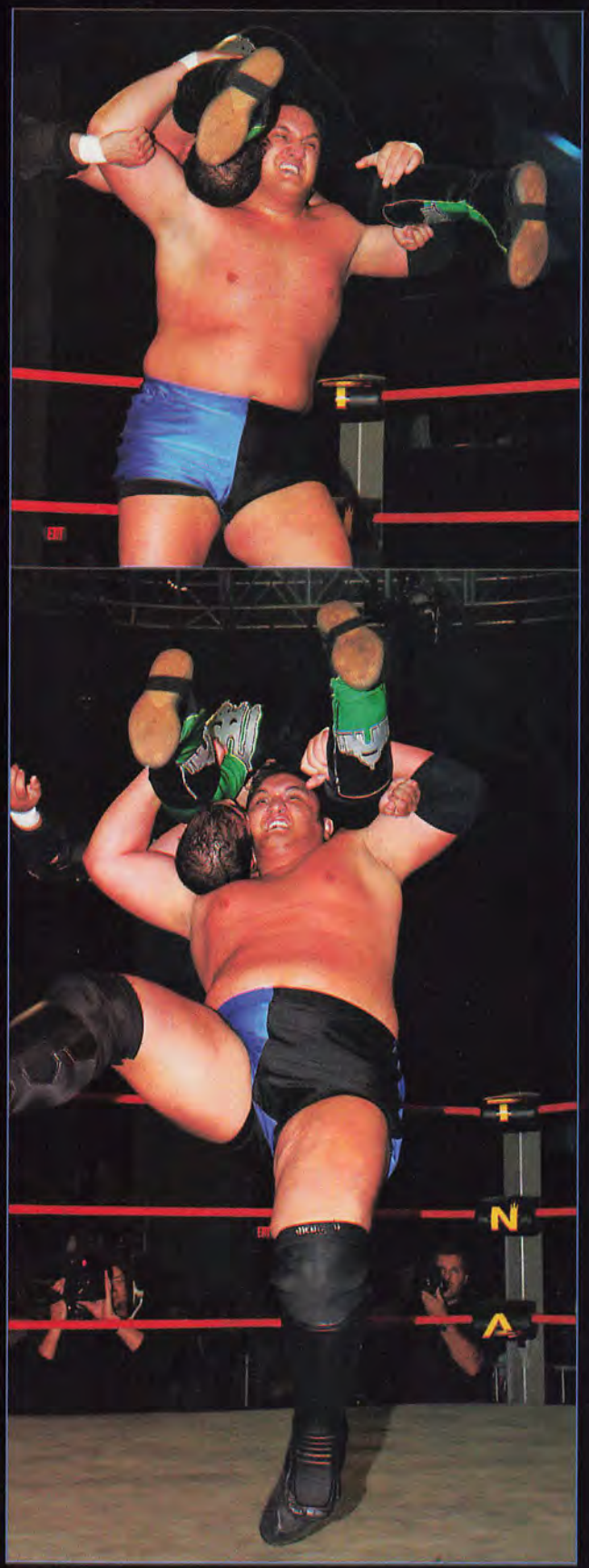
At first glance, Samoa Joe doesn't come off as being so impressive. Yes, he is big (primarily in weight—he usually checks in at about 270 pounds), but he isn't carrying around the same type of body as someone of similar size like Monty Brown. He just looks like a big, regular type of guy. Maybe a bouncer type at your local watering hole.

But when the bell rings, the beefy Samoan shows he is anything but a regular type of guy. The man comes at his opponents hard with stiff blows that would make Vader cringe, power moves that would force Batista to take notice, and submission holds that might have Chris Benoit and Kurt Angle jotting down a note or two. He won't win any "Best Body" contests, but that isn't what he comes to the ring to do.

Some of the toughest and most successful champions in the sport have had amazingly *un*impressive bodies. Think about superstars like Mick Foley and Dusty Rhodes. Neither will ever claim to have had a great physique, but then again, no one will question their abilities or success. Even the great Harley Race admitted that he didn't have the greatest looking body.

"I realized early on what worked best for me physically," said the eight-time NWA World champion. "I wasn't out to impress anyone with my physique. My job was to win, and that I did. And if I needed to go 60 minutes to get a win, I never had a problem. I think this Samoa Joe kid has the same mentality. And that mentality will win him a lot of gold and make him a lot of money. I've seen where he's gone 60 in Ring of Honor. Whatever pace you want to try to go with him, he's ready."

Joe already has an impressive championship resume, and he's barely a half-decade into his career. After defeating Xavier for the Ring of Honor championship in March 2003, he went on to



Two views of a muscle buster that Samoa Joe used to all but finish Sonjay Dutt in his TNA debut at Slammiversary (right and below). Some top TNA stars might not have known what a muscle buster was before Joe arrived. They know now.

It didn't take long for Joe to choke out Dutt in their very lopsided match. He wasn't screaming about getting an NWA title shot after this win. Just wait.

hold the title for an incredible 21 months before losing to Austin Aries. Along the way, Joe defended the title 29 times, defeating such top stars as current WWE cruiserweight champ Paul London, current TNA X champ Christopher Daniels, current ROH champ C.M. Punk, and former NWA heavyweight and TNA X champ A.J. Styles. In May, Joe wrested the ROH pure championship from Jay Lethal and continues to hold it.

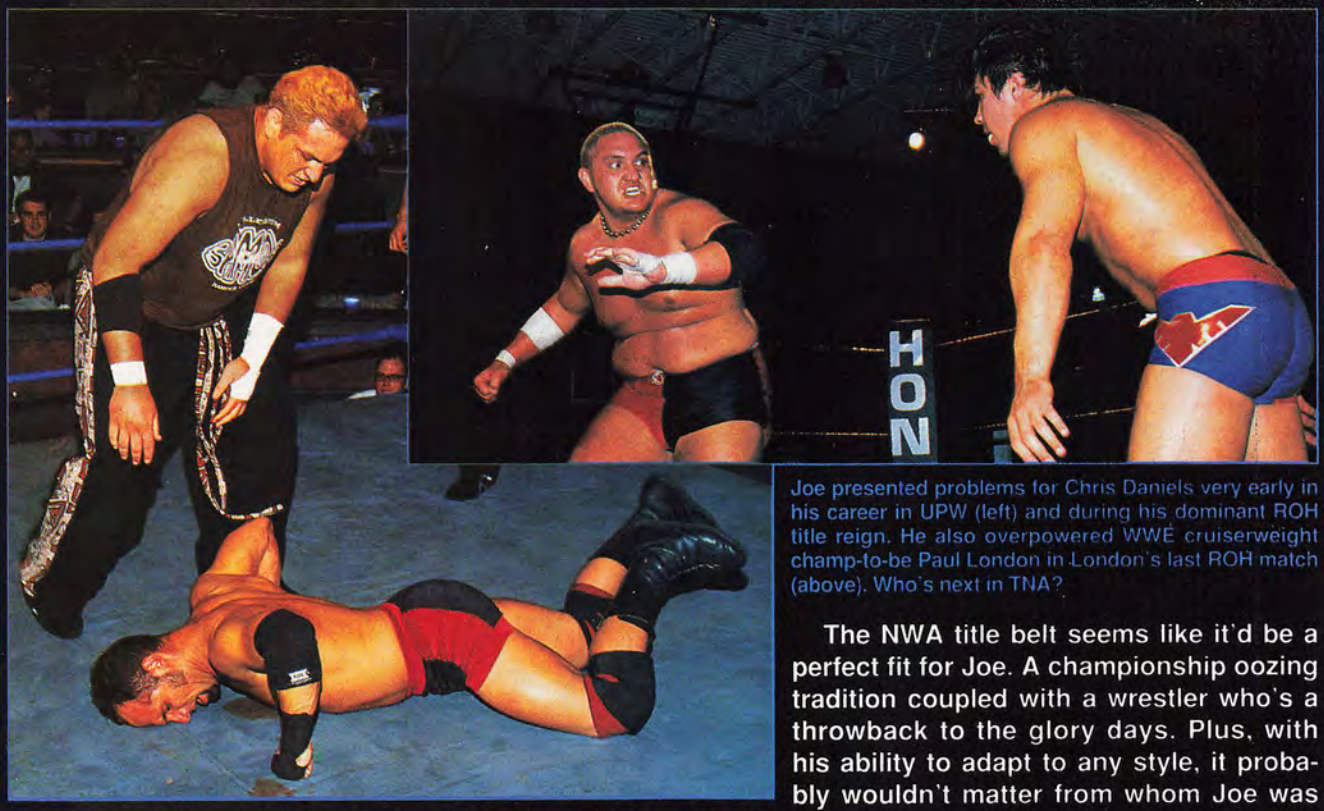
"That's nothing," said Zbyszko. "This guy is going to be in the mix for the NWA title, without a doubt. It's going to happen sooner or later, but I'm not sure which. I think he has his own schedule for everything worked out in his head. If he sticks around, he will be NWA champion at some point."

Other experts concur with Zbyszko's assessment. "He reminds me a lot of guys of the past like Harley Race and Gene Kiniski," said Dan Severn, a former Ultimate Fighting champion and two-time NWA champion. "Big, tough, and a lot of knowledge. He's not just a brawler, like everyone thinks. He's real versatile. He has moves that can put you down quick, or he can choke you out. He's got some shootfighting skills, too. He's so hard to prepare for."

The word "brawler" brings a lot of illustrious names to mind. Superstars of the past like Dick the Bruiser, The Sheik, and The Road Warriors. Sure, what they did wasn't always pretty, but did it matter when they walked away with their hands raised?

"He used to be a lot more of a classic brawler," Race noted. "I saw some of those old Ring of

"The man comes at his opponents hard with stiff blows that would make Vader cringe, power moves that would force Batista to take notice, and submission holds that might have Chris Benoit and Kurt Angle jotting down a note or two."



Joe presented problems for Chris Daniels very early in his career in UPW (left) and during his dominant ROH title reign. He also overpowered WWE cruiserweight champ-to-be Paul London in London's last ROH match (above). Who's next in TNA?

Honor matches. But he realized that brawling wasn't always going to be the answer. Now, with all those submission holds and that muscle buster, the guy is scary. He has NWA champion written all over him. From what I heard, he had some talks with WWE, but he decided TNA was a better fit. That tells me he has his eye on that NWA title."

Joe has used the muscle buster on many occasions to set up his dreaded choke sleeper, a combination that has earned him a spotless (as of this writing) singles record in TNA. He has certainly made a few TNA stars nervous since his arrival. Raven and Jeff Jarrett, just to name two—although neither would admit it. One can only wonder how long it will take for the NWA Championship Committee to take notice.

"Oh, they'll notice," Zbyszko promised. "How can they not when he's running over guys like he has been? Did you see what he did to Sonjay Dutt at Slammiversary? Dutt's a damn good wrestler, but he was no match for Joe. Joe let the match go just as long as he wanted it to go before ending it. He's taking his time, feeling out the TNA waters. When he's ready to pounce, he will."

The NWA title belt seems like it'd be a perfect fit for Joe. A championship oozing tradition coupled with a wrestler who's a throwback to the glory days. Plus, with his ability to adapt to any style, it probably wouldn't matter from whom Joe was standing across the ring in a championship match.

The experts have spoken. We'll just have to wait and see if Samoa Joe can live up to their expectations. Or, rather, when. □

When all else fails, or if he wants to wrap things up quickly, Samoa Joe can flat-out overpower a lot of his opponents. His stiff, powerful punches sure wobbled Dutt.

PWI'S TAG TEAM WISH LIST

It's Time For Wrestling To End Its Five-Year Drought!

By Harry Burkett

THANK YOU, Joey Mercury, Johnny Nitro, and Melina. Years from now, wrestling historians might look back at 2005 and credit this trio with launching a tag team renaissance in WWE. Indeed, M-N-M's entry into WWE meant more than a red carpet, flashing bulbs, and a few faux paparazzi.

Mercury and Nitro have been dominant champions since beating Eddie Guerrero and Rey Misterio Jr. for tag team gold in their first televised match with Smackdown. Why is that? It could have something to do with the fact that Mercury and Nitro are dedicating themselves exclusively to tag team wrestling. The Smackdown tag team belts aren't just trinkets they've grabbed along the way. Those belts represent their primary goal in this sport.

M-N-M is the best pure tag team to enter WWE in a long time. It's too bad there isn't much in the way of tag teams to challenge them. How great can you be if you lack competition? WWE could do something about that

Considering some of the lackluster teams that have called themselves champions, it's no wonder why wrestling's tag team titles have lost so much prestige. Scotty Too Hotty and Rikishi, Charlie Haas and Rico, and Rene Dupree and Kenzo Suzuki are among those less-than-spectacular duos who have held the Smackdown tag team title.

As far as Raw is concerned, does anyone even remember that Lance Storm and Christian were tag team champs? Or that Rob Van Dam and Kane held the gold? With The Hurricane and Rosey as the current champions, is there any wonder why Raw's tag team division has no credibility? The Heartthrobs received the call-up from Ohio Valley at about the same time as M-N-M, but so far, they haven't come close to winning the belts.

WWE's tag team divisions have been in a drought for five years. Yes, it really has been that long since Edge and Christian vs. The Hardy Boyz vs. The Dudley Boyz won *PWI's* Match of the Year Award as a result of the first-ever table, ladders, and chairs match at WrestleMania XVI. A TLC match at SummerSlam involving the same three teams earned third runner-up honors that same year. Also

in 2000, Edge and Christian vs. The Hardy Boyz earned third runner-up in the Feud of the Year category. Since 2000, there has been ...

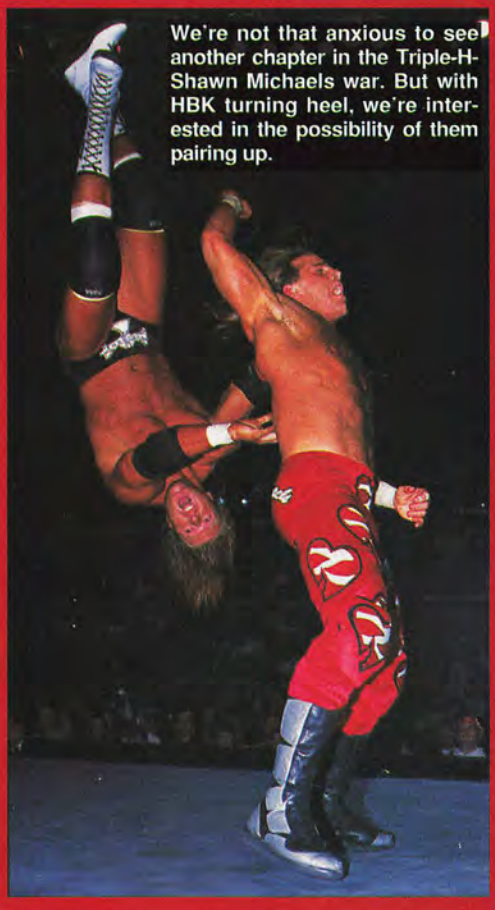
Nothing.

Edge and Christian split. Matt and Jeff Hardy parted ways. Even Buh Buh Ray and D-Von Dudley were forced apart temporarily because of the original brand extension in 2002. It was pressure from that same brand extension that caused WWE officials to ignore the tag team division in order to focus on the singles ranks.

When Eric Bischoff was president of WCW, he tried to dismantle the tag team division, believing it was a waste of money and talent. Why pay four wrestlers to compete in a match when two can do the job? For every tag team match, Bischoff reasoned, there was the possibility of two singles matches. Like Bischoff struggling to book *Nitro* and *Thunder,* Vince McMahon has been unwilling to invest in tag team wrestling since Raw and Smackdown have had separate rosters.

So, what are the chances of a return to the days of E & C, the Hardys, and the Dudleys? Or the 1980s glory years of Brutus Beefcake and Greg Valentine, The British Bulldogs, The Hart Foundation, Demolition, and The Rockers? Despite massive layoffs in July, WWE has enough wrestlers to support several more tag teams. And, considering that a tag team is often worth more than the sum of its two parts, we would argue that an investment in tag team wrestling could help WWE make better use of its talent.

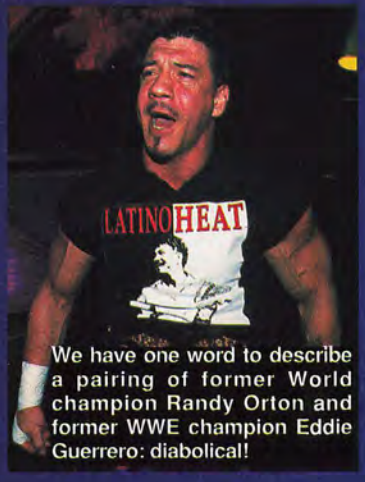
Of course, we're willing to make suggestions. Here are 10 tag teams we would like to see in WWE. Come on, Vince, make the hot tag ... and bring these guys together.



We're not that anxious to see another chapter in the Triple-H-Shawn Michaels war. But with HBK turning heel, we're interested in the possibility of them pairing up.

Shawn Michaels & Triple-H:

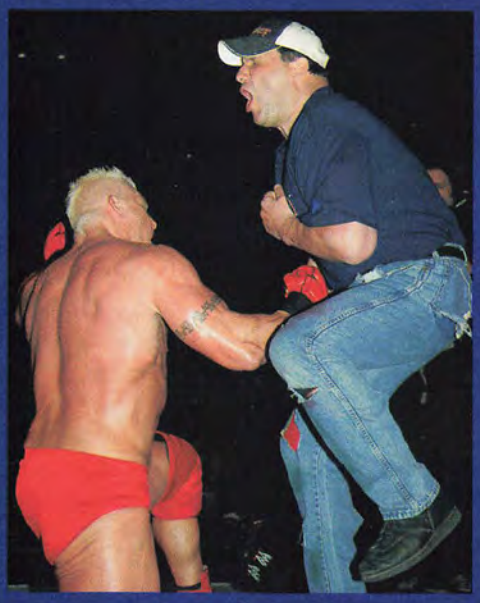
These veterans are at the crossroads. Michaels has superkicked Hulk Hogan and Roddy Piper, making him one of Raw's most hated men. And what are the odds of Triple-H stopping the red-hot John Cena and capturing the WWE title? The time for a DeGeneration X reunion is now. Without the crotch chops, the foul language, and the childish antics, Michaels and Helmsley could cause some real devastation.



We have one word to describe a pairing of former World champion Randy Orton and former WWE champion Eddie Guerrero: diabolical!

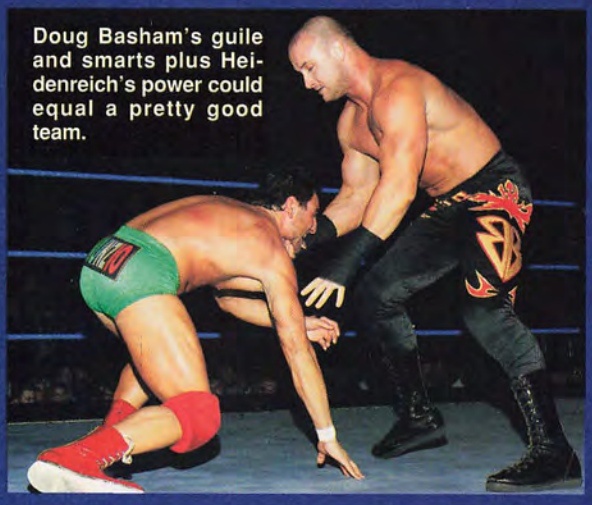
Randy Orton & Eddie Guerrero:

As soon as Orton is healthy again, he will be competing against Guerrero and John Bradshaw Layfield to become the most despised man on Smackdown. These men have never teamed, nor have they ever had a significant rivalry, so a Guerrero/Orton tag team would be a completely new dynamic. Couldn't this be the most underhanded and diabolical team in WWE history?

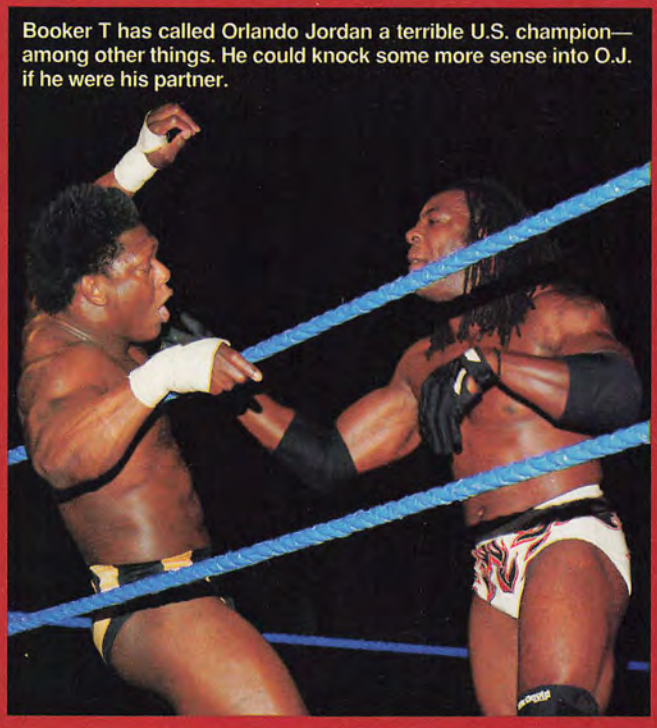


Doug Basham & Heidenreich:

Now that Danny has been traded to Raw, Doug could use another brother. Heidenreich's alliance with Animal can't last. Doug was the ring general of The Basham Brothers, with Danny as a mere foot soldier. If Doug replaced Danny with the 6'7", 300-pound Heidenreich, he could conquer Smackdown's tag team division. Doug's brain and Heidenreich's brawn might be unstoppable.



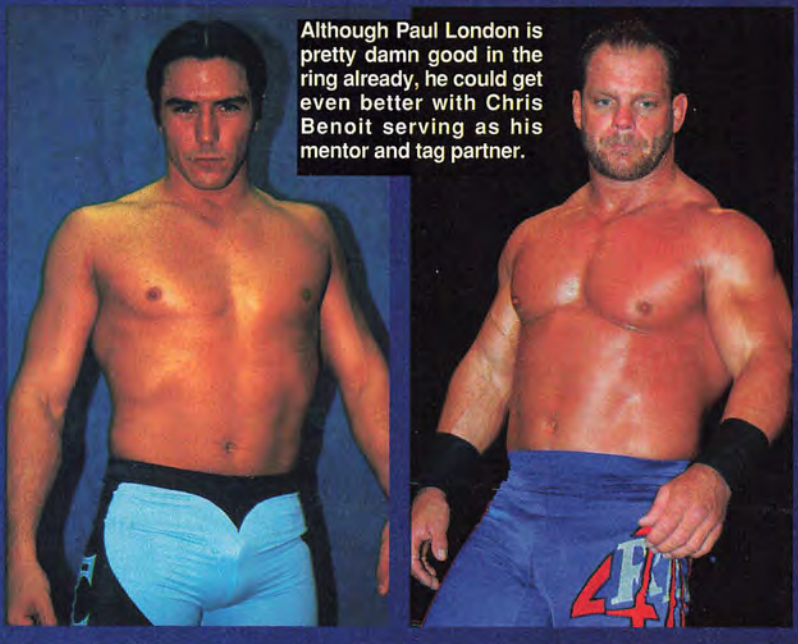
Doug Basham's guile and smarts plus Heidenreich's power could equal a pretty good team.



Booker T has called Orlando Jordan a terrible U.S. champion—among other things. He could knock some more sense into O.J. if he were his partner.

Paul London & Chris Benoit:

Ever since Benoit lost the World title to Randy Orton at SummerSlam 2004, he has been directionless. With nothing else to prove and WWE unlikely to give him a similar push again, Benoit should take on the role of veteran mentor. London, the WWE cruiserweight champ, is young and eager to learn. We can't think of a more exciting teacher/student duo—especially with a teacher still able to go.



Although Paul London is pretty damn good in the ring already, he could get even better with Chris Benoit serving as his mentor and tag partner.

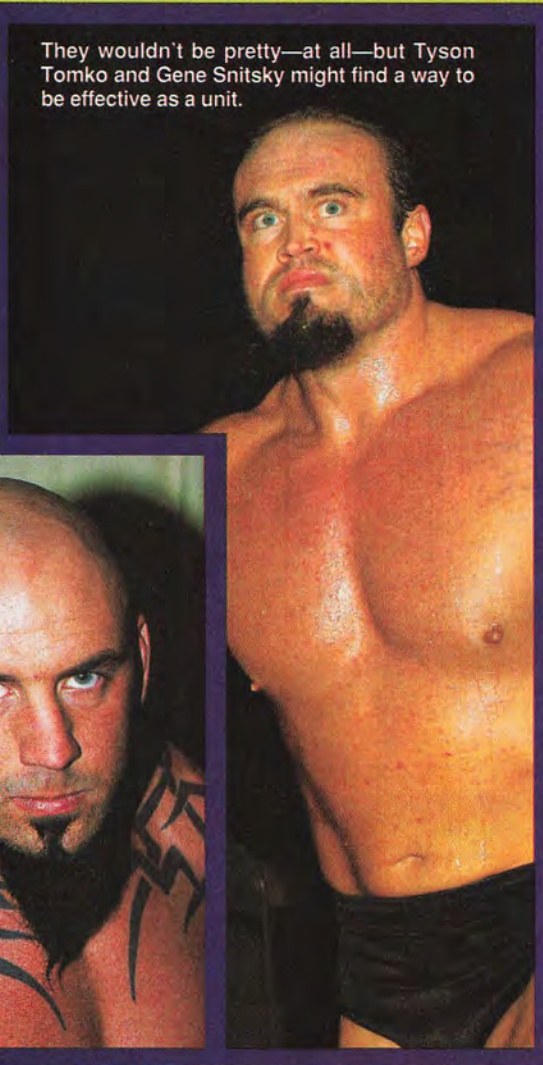
Danny Basham & Kerwin White:

Chavo Guerrero Jr. has succeeded in becoming as vanilla as anyone in WWE—even Danny Basham. If Guerrero wants to be white bread, if he wants to be square, isn't Basham the perfect chum? With his bald pate and plastic personality, Kerwin White looks more like Danny's brother than Doug Basham. Tie a sweater around Danny's neck and get it going!

Danny Basham needs something to do with Raw, and the former Chavo Guerrero Jr. could help him with that.

Orlando Jordan & Booker T:

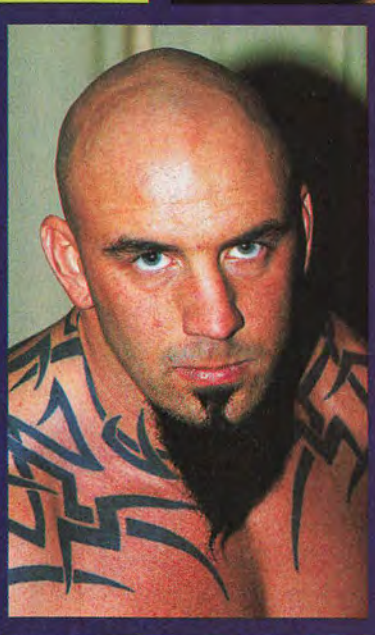
Sure, you think we've fallen prey to the same stereotypical booking that has plagued wrestling for 100 years. But we can think of other reasons why Jordan and Booker T would make a great team, besides the fact that both are African-Americans. Booker criticized Orlando for being JBL's "house boy." Now is Booker's chance to show him the proper path. Can you feel the new Harlem Heat?



They wouldn't be pretty—at all—but Tyson Tomko and Gene Snitsky might find a way to be effective as a unit.

Tyson Tomko & Gene Snitsky:

These are the two most ugly dudes in WWE. Why not dispense with all that ugliness in one segment? The duo of Snitsky and Tomko would be patterned after other colossal teams, including Mark Callous (The Undertaker) and Dan Spivey, The Powers of Pain, and Big Bossman and Akeem. A blend of muscles, tattoos, and snarling pusses, Snitsky and Tomko could be the most intimidating team in WWE.



BARELY QUENCHING OUR THIRST:

THE TOP 10 TAG TEAMS OF THE DROUGHT YEARS

Just because tag team competition has been at an all-time low since 2000, it doesn't mean that some very talented duos haven't come along during the past half-decade. Indeed, these teams didn't benefit from the WWE hype machine or the wisdom of almighty Creative. They were left to perform on their own, and they showed us some admirable teamwork. For your review, we have ranked the top tag teams—numbers one through 10—during WWE's long, hard drought.

1. Ric Flair & Triple-H: We believe the greatest WWE tag team between 2000 and 2005 has been "The Game" and his faithful adviser. Flair and Helmsley have never made a run for the Raw tag team title, but they have been a frequent staple of tag team and six-man tag team main events on *Raw* over the past couple of years.

2. The Undertaker & Kane: "The Half-Brothers Of Destruction" are the most dominant duo to steamroll through WWE, yet their inability to co-exist makes them number two on our list. If Undertaker and Kane had committed themselves to tag team competition, rather than wrestle as a special attraction, they could have been among the all-time best.

3. Robert Conway & Sylvan Grenier: With little fanfare, La Resistance—as Raw tag team champions—reigned supreme for Raw in 2004-'05. While Creative might have ignored them, the wild celebration that followed their victory over Chris Benoit and Edge for the World tag team title in Montreal proved they had a following—if only in Quebec.

4. Eddie Guerrero & Rey Misterio Jr.: Unfortunately, Guerrero's betrayal of Misterio this spring effectively ended, in our opinion, the best tag team in Smackdown history. Guerrero and Misterio had been allies and enemies in Mexico, ECW, and WCW. When the bell rang, their timing was unparalleled, their chemistry undeniable.

5. Chris Benoit & Chris Jericho: Despite a vicious feud over the Intercontinental title in 2000, Benoit and Jericho put aside their differences to challenge Steve Austin and Triple-H for the WWE World tag team belts in 2001—and their victory that night on *Raw* was widely viewed as the breakthrough match of their careers.

6. M-N-M: Joey Mercury and Johnny Nitro are undoubtedly the most successful tag team to emerge from Ohio Valley. After dismantling Eddie Guerrero and Rey Misterio Jr. for the Smackdown tag team straps in their first televised WWE match, M-N-M already started seeking new challengers. Charlie Haas and Hardcore Holly? They didn't have a chance.

7. Billy Gunn & Chuck Palumbo: Forget the feminine overtones, Billy and Chuck were a terrific team. They were the champs in 2002 during the driest part of the five-year drought, when the tag team division was exclusive to Smackdown. Despite their wedding on national TV, these guys weren't gay. (Not that there's anything wrong with that.)

8. Shelton Benjamin & Charlie Haas: The world's greatest tag team? Maybe they were—for at least a couple of fleeting periods in 2003. Yet Eddie Guerrero seemed to have their number, because he cost them the Smackdown tag team title on two occasions, with partners Tajiri and Chavo Guerrero Jr., respectively.

9. Booker T & Goldust: Who could forget these moments? Booker T slipping into bed, presumably with his new girlfriend, but finding Goldust there. Goldust chomping on a hot dog while spying on Booker in a convenience store. And, after Goldust was electrocuted and contracted Turret's Syndrome, Booker defending him. Yeah, those were good times.

Booker T and Goldust: a fine (and funny) duo

10. The Basham Brothers: John Bradshaw Layfield's co-secretaries of defense remained in the shadows of The Cabinet during their peak run with Smackdown, so their three-month tag team title reign didn't make much of an impact. Nevertheless, Doug and Danny were committed to tag team wrestling and deserve a spot in our top 10.

—Harry Burkett

William Regal has enjoyed success with Tajiri as his partner. Now that he's with Smackdown, he could make a new Far East connection.

William Regal & Funaki:

When Eugene suffered a dislocated kneecap in January, Regal reunited with his former manservant, Tajiri, to pursue the Raw tag team title. Why did that East-West connection have such chemistry? Was it Regal's nurturing instinct? The whole British Empire-Far East colonial thing? Whatever it was, culture was not a barrier, so there's no reason why Regal couldn't be successful with Funaki with Smackdown.

Chris Masters & Val Venis:

Only a couple of months ago, Masters humiliated Venis by snaring him in the Masterlock and not releasing him. Venis would have to suck up his pride to join Masters, but each man desperately needs an ally. Masters is a star on the rise, yet he could use sage advice from someone like Venis, who helped train wrestlers in OVW. And Venis is drowning on *Sunday Night Heat,* which is, in itself, a sinking ship.

We like the extraordinarily powerful Chris Masters' chances of making an impact with the underrated Val Venis.

Why not a duo of divas? Maybe Victoria could help Candice Michelle develop her psycho side.

Candice Michelle & Victoria:

A regular female tag team hasn't graced WWE since Lelani Kai and Judy Martin paired in the mid-1980s. If these raven-haired vixens formed a team, they would add a much-needed twist to the women's division. WWE probably wouldn't reactivate the women's tag team title that has lain dormant for 16 years, so we'd settle for Trish Stratus and Christy Hemme vs. Victoria and Candice Michelle. Oh, daddy! □

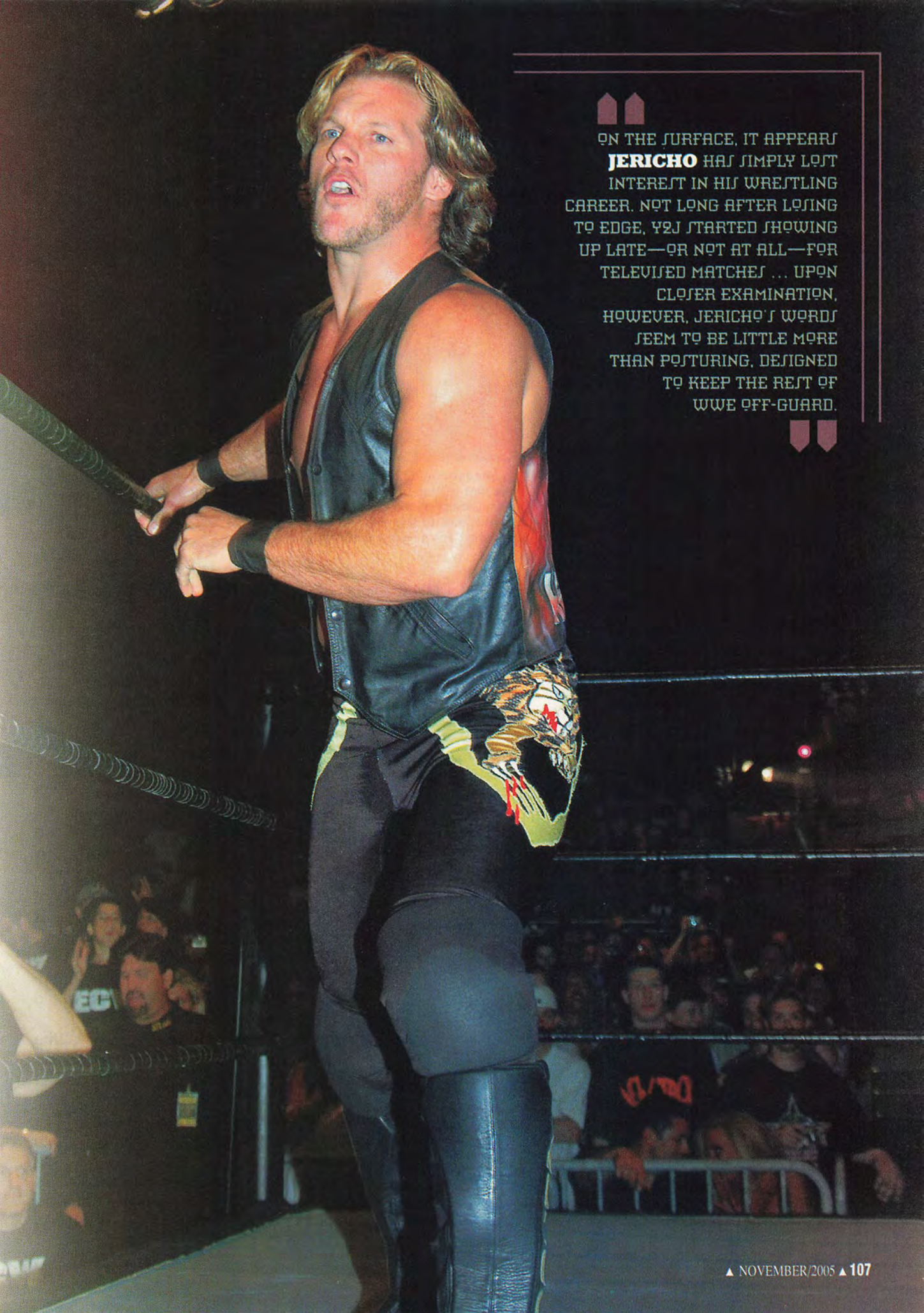
DON'T LET JERICHO FOOL YOU!

HE'S AS DEDICATED NOW AS HE EVER WAS

For a man who's lost his zeal for wrestling, Chris Jericho's lionsault still looks pretty impressive. We still see a lot of zeal—even if Jericho wishes we wouldn't look so closely.

By Bill Meltzer

FOR BETTER OR for worse, Chris Jericho has always done things his own way. To put it mildly, he's never lacked for self-confidence or ambition. Wrestling star, musician, radio host, and fixture on VH-1's *I Love The '80s* and *I Love The '90s* series, Jericho's always ignored skeptics who predict he's in danger of spreading himself too thin.



ON THE SURFACE, IT APPEARS **JERICHO** HAS SIMPLY LOST INTEREST IN HIS WRESTLING CAREER. NOT LONG AFTER LOSING TO EDGE, Y2J STARTED SHOWING UP LATE—OR NOT AT ALL—FOR TELEVISED MATCHES ... UPON CLOSER EXAMINATION, HOWEVER, JERICHO'S WORDS SEEM TO BE LITTLE MORE THAN POSTURING, DESIGNED TO KEEP THE REST OF WWE OFF-GUARD.

To his credit, Y2J has always managed to put the distractions aside when the bell rings. Even when he doesn't get his hand raised, Jericho usually gives a strong accounting for himself. No small feat considering he's a cruiserweight usually going up against heavyweights.

Jericho's secret: For all his side projects and aura of cockiness, he's always taken his wrestling career very seriously, a lesson that was literally pounded into him from day one of his wrestling training in Stu Hart's Dungeon.

What's more, whenever Jericho has felt dissatisfied in his wrestling career, he's made a bold move to propel himself back into the limelight. Who can forget him turning heel on The Rock less than a month after they lost the WWE tag team title to Booker T and Test?

That, of course, set up Jericho for one of the most extraordinary accomplishments in wrestling history. On the night of December 9, 2001, Jericho cemented a permanent place in wrestling history when he became the first man to unify the WWE and WCW World titles, beating The Rock and "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin on the same night.

Hard to believe, but nearly four full years have passed since Jericho stood at the pinnacle of his sport. In the meantime, the former undisputed WWE, Intercontinental, European, and tag team champion has garnered nearly as much attention for his non-wrestling endeavors as he has for his activities inside the ring.

Has it taken a toll? There's no doubt 2005 hasn't been a banner year for Jericho as a wrestler so far. After being overshadowed by other combatants in the WrestleMania 21 ladder match, Y2J came up short against Shelton Benjamin in an effort to win his eighth Intercontinental title. Finally, Jericho was dropped by Edge in the Gold Rush Tournament.

You almost couldn't blame Jericho for being more interested in side projects if he was stuck wrestling Sylvan Grenier all the time (above and right). But he's not stuck in a rut anymore. He has a real shot at stopping John Cena's momentum cold.

On the surface, it appears Jericho has simply lost interest in his wrestling career. Not long after losing to Edge, Y2J started showing up late—or not at all—for some of his televised matches. When he did wrestle, Jericho displayed total nonchalance, even publicly telling Benjamin he didn't care about wins and losses anymore because he had so many other things going on outside the ring.

Upon closer examination, however, Jericho's words seem to be little more than posturing, designed to keep the rest of WWE off-guard. After abandoning Benjamin in a tag team match against Muhammad Hassan and Daivari, Jericho revealed his real plan. He turned heel on WWE champion John Cena, staring longingly at the WWE belt after attacking the champion and applying the Walls of Jericho.

Although Jericho was unable to wrest the belt from the white-hot Cena in their subsequent triple threat match with Christian at Vengeance, Y2J's strong preparation and conditioning were evident throughout the match. He hardly looked like someone with divided priorities, even though he was ultimately laid out by Cena's five-knuckle shuffle.

Another point to keep in mind: If Jericho had been pulling repeated no-shows at TV tapings

There doesn't seem to be much intensity etched on Jericho's face as he ties up the legs of Lance Storm at One Night Stand. The guy has a great poker face.

Y2J couldn't unseat I-C champ Shelton Benjamin this year or last (above) and didn't fare so well against Edge, either (right). Don't believe him when he says losses don't bother him anymore, however.

without at least the tacit approval of WWE, he wouldn't have been rewarded with the title shot. And if McMahon suspected Jericho's heart was no longer in WWE, Y2J probably would have been on the lengthy casualty list in the company's most recent housecleaning.

The Cena-Jericho feud has continued to heat up this summer, with Jericho taking swipes at Cena during Y2J's "Highlight Reel" segments on *Raw* and the war of words spilling over into physical altercations.

Nevertheless, Jericho himself has continued to insist wrestling in general—and Cena's title in particular—is not his main priority at present.

"Look, I'm a busy man," he said, shouting over the noise of his band, Fozzy, rehearsing nearby. "We've got a big tour of Australia coming up this fall, you know."

Asked if he was frustrated witnessing the rise of Cena, whose own ambitions to be a crossover star outweigh even Jericho's, Jericho snickered.

"Are you serious, man?" asked Jericho, incredulously. "Look, Cena's been on a roll in the ring lately. Good for him. When I'm good and ready, I'll be happy to relieve him of *my* belt. Actually, I kind of feel sorry for the guy. The belt's all he has. I'm a huge rock star and this guy doesn't realize his crap rap career is the biggest joke since Junkyard Dog went on *American Bandstand* to lip-synch 'Grab Them Cakes.'"

Meanwhile, sources close to Jericho say the ex-champ is playing mind games with Cena. The ex-champion fully realizes he'll need a superior effort to knock off the bigger, younger, stronger titleholder.

"He's trying to psych Cena out, for sure," said a fellow Raw wrestler, speaking on condition of anonymity. "I've spotted Chris at the gym more than once at around 5 a.m. lately, working out like madman. I've seen him arriving early for TV tapings, carrying an armful of match videos to watch in the back. Yeah, Jericho's got Fozzy and all those public appearances, but wrestling's still his passion. He figures that if he gives Cena the appearance that he's not a dedicated challenger, Cena might feel he has the green light to get lax. He just doesn't want anyone, especially Cena, to know what he's really up to."

One thing's for sure. Jericho will need every bit of preparation—and cunning—to work his way back to the top of the WWE heap. But don't think for a second that that isn't what we wants more than anything. □

the business page

By Harry Burkett

More Hassan backlash ... WWE executives are finding out that simply running a disclaimer warning viewers of controversial content didn't prevent the mainstream media from condemning the terrorist overtones of the July 7 edition of *Smackdown.*

For those of you fortunate enough to have missed it, Muhammad Hassan "sacrificed" his manager, Khosrow Daivari, by making him face The Undertaker. At the end of the match, hooded men in black attire rushed the ring, attacked The Undertaker, and wrapped a metal wire around his neck to choke him. That harsh imagery, reminiscent of recent beheadings in the Middle East, struck many viewers as inappropriate, particularly in light of subway and bus bombings that occurred in London earlier in the week. WWE executives claimed there wasn't enough time to edit the segment from the North American version of *Smackdown,* although it was later omitted in the United Kingdom. For more information on this story, make sure to check out "Ringside" in this issue.

There was coverage of the Hassan matter throughout the media, from national newspapers to the Fox News Channel. As a result, UPN asked WWE to drop the Hassan character from its programming altogether. "We asked them to remove it because we thought that was the right thing to do," UPN spokeswoman Joanna Massey told msnbc.com.

Not surprisingly, the angle drew the ire of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, which has long objected to the character, resulting in one of its campaigns generating 500 complaints to WWE. "The character deals with a very sensitive issue," commented Siwar Bandar, a spokeswoman for the committee, also in an interview with msnbc.com. "However, he does so in a context that is violent, that is turning his back on America."

In light of the fallout, WWE spokesman Gary Davis didn't have

A lot of people have been hoping to see the Muhammad Hassan character just go away, and it appears they will get their wish. Complaints over his antics forced UPN and WWE to take drastic action.

much of a defense when questioned by the media. "This was an unfortunate sequence of events," he said. "Some people drew the conclusion these people were terrorists even though they weren't terrorists."

Although WWE continued with its plans to have Hassan battle The Undertaker at SummerSlam, its Web site confirmed that he "has taken a leave of absence from Smackdown." It could become a permanent one.

Impact vs. Velocity ... No, *TNA Impact* and *WWE Velocity* aren't going head-to-head anytime soon in a small-scale Saturday night version of the Monday night war, but sources have confirmed that a weekly TNA program will replace *Velocity* on Saturday night in October as part of Spike TV's "Slammin' Saturday Night" lineup, which will also include Ultimate Fighting and Howard Stern.

Nevertheless, this will be the first instance of a direct, tangible comparison between TNA and WWE. *Velocity* has been scoring a respectable—yet not impressive—average rating of 0.5 on Saturday nights, which is also in line with its predecessor, *Confidential,* in the same time slot. Furthermore, *Velocity* has risen above 1.0 only three times since its debut on May 25, 2002.

Impact, meanwhile, scored 0.2 on good weeks, sometimes jumping to 0.3, on Fox Sports Net during the past year despite erratic scheduling. When TNA's deal with FSN expired, it was able to pursue a contract with Spike TV. A potential deal with WGN fell through in June.

But that's turned out to be good for TNA. Spike TV reaches 88 million homes in the U.S., compared to 60 million for WGN and benefits from the promotional muscle of its parent company, Viacom.

Stacy steps out ... WWE's leggiest diva still refuses to do a nude layout for *Playboy,* according to *Steppin' Out,* an entertainment magazine based in the New York-New Jersey area. In addition to fielding juvenile questions regarding how it feels to be "watched from behind" and which wrestler she would like to "pin down," Stacy Keibler confirmed that *Playboy* offered her tons of money on two occasions, and Vince McMahon had personally presented those offers to her, but she turned down both the cash—and her employer—both times.

"It's just not something I want to do with my career," said Keibler. "But, also, we have such young fans. I know that our demographic is a big range of people ... It was hard. I almost cried over it."

Like her fellow diva Trish Stratus, Keibler has sided with personal principle instead of selling out for money or the sake of advancing her career. Oh, and fellas, here's some good news: She's no longer dating Test!

As the manager of The Hurricane and Rosey, Stacy Keibler now keeps part of her face covered at ringside. She recently reiterated in a magazine interview that she has no plans to reveal other parts of her body.

WWE Stockwatch

(For the period of June 16 to July 15, 2005)

30-Day High: 12.45 on July 11
30-Day Low: 9.98 on June 27
52-Week High: 13.47 on November 22, 2004
52-Week Low: 9.91 on May 4, 2005

Despite WrestleMania 21 garnering 983,000 buys at the latest count and being the most profitable wrestling event in history, WWE's fourth quarter presented a somewhat gloomy picture of the company's overall financial state. Total revenues were $118-million for the quarter, down from $126.7-million for the same period in 2004.

Simply put, the domestic market is causing WWE the biggest problem. WWE's house shows were the only hot spot in its otherwise-uphill battle against WCW in the mid-1990s, but that has changed now. The live event business is making even less money now that WWE has increased its total number of house shows through the brand extension. The house show slide has been a disturbing phenomenon, yet even bigger trouble might be the fall in pay-per-view sales. More than ever, fans are more likely to skip No Way Out, for example, and save their money for WrestleMania.

On a brighter note, *Raw* has now officially surpassed *Gunsmoke* for producing the most original episodes of any weekly "fictional entertainment program," according to WWE. There were 635 episodes of *Gunsmoke* during the western's 20-year run on CBS. Just one question: Are we now supposed to refer to WWE wrestlers as fictional entertainment superstars?

TV breakdown

RAW (Spike TV)

June 20: 3.9
June 27: 4.4
July 4: 2.6
July 11: 3.6
July 18: 3.8
July 25: 3.8

Analysis: Happy days are here again! Or at least that's what WWE executives must have been thinking when *Raw* scored an overall rating of 4.4 on June 27. While the 2004 talent draft, technically speaking, drew a higher rating of 4.5, this particular rating of 4.4—statistically speaking—actually attracted more viewers. And the June 27 edition was definitely a hot show. In addition to *Raw* introducing its final two draft picks, which turned out to be Rob Van Dam and The Big Show, there was still a tremendous buzz over WWE champion John Cena's switch from Smackdown and the ensuing fallout. But here's the dreaded news for wrestling purists: The diva search segment actually scored higher than the big match pitting Cena, Shawn Michaels, and the returning Hulk Hogan against Chris Jericho, Christian, and Tyson Tomko.

SMACKDOWN (UPN)

June 16: 3.4
June 23: 3.3
June 30: 3.2
July 7: 3.2
July 14: 3.1
July 21: 3.1

Analysis: Did the loss of its most popular star, John Cena, cause *Smackdown* to lose viewers? Not really. Of course, *Smackdown* did benefit from Christian and World champion Batista making the jump as the brand's final two draft picks on June 30. Batista's switch seemed more like an afterthought after Cena's more surprising jump to Raw. Nevertheless, *Smackdown* remains the more stable of the two programs, rarely dipping below 3.0 these days, but that also means it isn't as prone to dramatic ratings increases. In addition, it seems that Smackdown got the poorer end of the draft lottery. It isn't likely the other draft picks—Chris Benoit and Randy Orton—will do a lot to reinvigorate the brand. Muhammad Hassan, who did have some momentum coming from Raw, will most likely undergo a makeover after the recent controversy over his character.

VELOCITY (Spike TV)

June 18: 0.5
June 25: 0.7
July 2: 0.5
July 9: 0.7
July 16: 0.6
July 23: 0.5

Analysis: *Velocity* has become a lame-duck program as a result of news that it will not be among the WWE programming that will survive the jump to the USA Network in October. The July 16 edition was actually a highlight show because *Smackdown* was taped on Monday before *Raw* aired live, leaving no time for *Velocity* or *Sunday Night Heat* tapings. Actually, that show was highly entertaining because it featured highlights from WWE's recent *Superstars Of The '80s* DVD, including a segment on Roddy Piper.

THE WWE EXPERIENCE (Spike TV)

June 19: 0.5
June 26: 0.4
July 3: 0.5
July 10: 0.5
July 17: 0.5
July 24: 0.4

Analysis: Tragedy has come upon *The WWE Experience!* WWE has added Ivory to its long list of talent cuts! While we expect WWE to supply Todd Grisham with a temporary co-host, most likely Josh Matthews at this point, *Experience* will likely go as extinct as Ivory in October. While Todd and Ivory had great chemistry during *Experience's* run, witty rapport was never enough to make the show a success. We're sure the cappuccino-addicted Ivory can find a job at a Starbucks.

SUNDAY NIGHT HEAT (Spike TV)

June 19: 0.8
June 26: 0.7
July 3: 0.7
July 10: 0.7
July 17: 0.7
July 24: 0.8

Analysis: *Sunday Night Heat* is the only secondary cable program expected to join the USA Network this fall. Not only is it affiliated with what has become the flagship brand, Raw, but it also has a previous track record with the USA Network in the 7 p.m. time slot. Whether it will stay as a secondary show to *Raw*, or become some type of hybrid highlight show, remains to be seen. In terms of pure numbers, remaining affiliated with *Raw* and featuring original matches is probably the wisest course for *Heat*.

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Ultra-Deluxe Replica (WWEUDB12) $499.00
Kid-Size Replica (WWEKB12) $109.00

Nameplates Available: Triple H, Chris Jericho, Undertaker, The Rock, Kurt Angle, JBL, Eddie Guerrero, John Cena, Blank

Personalized Replica Belt Nameplates

Adult Size or Deluxe Size (ENGRAVEADULT1) $25.00 each
Kid Size (ENGRAVEKID1) $15.00 each

For all Adult Size, Deluxe Size and Kid Size & Replica Belts that have nameplates. Please specify the style and size belt the nameplate is for.

United States Championship Belt

Nameplates Available: Blank, John Cena, Kurt Angle, Chris Benoit

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB19) $225.00
Kid-Size Replica (WWEBK19) $109.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB19) $369.00
Mini Replica (WWEMINI19) $30.00

Intercontinental Championship Belt

Nameplates Available: Blank, Randy Orton, Rob Van Dam, Kane, Chris Jericho, Shawn Michaels

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB18) $225.00
Kid-Size Replica (WWEBK18) $109.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB18) $369.00
Mini Replica (WWEMINI18) $30.00

$5 Million Dollar Belt $$

Adult-Size Belt Replica $399.00 (WWEDB33)

Undisputed Championship Belt Version 1

Nameplates Available: Blank, Triple H, Chris Jericho, Undertaker, The Rock, Kurt Angle

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB9) $225.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB9) $369.00
Mini Replica (WWEMINI9) $30.00

World Tag Team Championship Belt

Nameplates Available: Blank, William Regal, Chris Jericho, Christian, The Hurricane, Booker T

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB16) $225.00
Kid-Size Replica (WWEBK16) $109.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB16) $369.00
Mini Replica (WWEMINI16) $30.00

Tag Team Championship Belt

Nameplates Available: Blank, Edge, Kurt Angle, Chris Benoit, Eddie Guerrero, John Cena, Rey Mysterio

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB13) $225.00
Kid-Size Replica (WWEBK13) $109.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB13) $369.00
Mini Replica (WWEMINI13) $30.00

Cruiserweight Championship Belt

Nameplates Available: Blank, The Hurricane, Rey Mysterio, Tajiri

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB10) $225.00
Kid-Size Replica (WWEBK10) $109.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB10) $369.00
Mini Replica (WWEMINI10) $30.00

Women's Championship Belt

Nameplates Available: Blank, Lita, Ivory, Trish Stratus, Torrie Wilson, Stacy Keibler, Victoria

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB11) $225.00
Kid-Size Replica (WWEBK11) $109.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB11) $369.00
Mini Replica (WWEMINI11) $30.00

Winged Eagle World Championship

Adult-Size Replica with: black strap (WWEB30) blue strap (WWEB30B) $249.00 each
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB30) $399.00
Kid-Size Replica (WWEBK30) $109.00
Mini Replica (WWEMINI30) $30.00
Mini Replica (blue strap) (WWEMIN30B) $30.00

1986 World Championship Belt

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB32) $249.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB32) $369.00
Mini Replica (WWEMINI32) $30.00

Intercontinental Belt

Adult-Size Replica with: black strap (WWEB31) white strap (WWEB31W) Yellow strap (WWEB31Y) Blue strap (WWEB31B) $249.00 each
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB31) $399.00
Kid-Size Replica (WWEBK31) $109.00
Mini Replica (WWEMINI31) $30.00
Mini Replica (blue strap) (WWEMINI31B) $30.00
Mini Replica (yellow strap) (WWEMINI31Y) $30.00

1985-1998 Tag Team Belt

Adult-Size Belt Replica $299.00 (WWEB33)

Attitude Edition World Champion

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB20) $225.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB20) $349.00
Kid-Size Replica (WWEBK20) $109.00

Smokin' Skull World Champion

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB15) $225.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB15) $349.00

Attitude Edition European Champion

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB23) $225.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB23) $349.00

Attitude Edition Tag Team Champion

Adult-Size Replica (WWEB22) $225.00
Deluxe Replica (WWEDB22) $349.00

ECW Heavyweight Champion

Adult-Size Replica (ECWB1) $199.00
Deluxe Replica (ECWDB1) $349.00
Kid-Size Replica (ECWBK1) $109.00
Mini-Size Replica (ECWMINI1) $30.00

ECW Television Champion

Adult-Size Replica (ECWB2) $199.00
Deluxe Replica (ECWDB2) $349.00
Kid-Size Replica (ECWBK2) $109.00
Kid-Size Replica (ECWMINI2) $30.00

ECW Tag Team Champion

Adult-Size Replica (ECWB3) $199.00
Deluxe Replica (ECWDB3) $349.00
Kid-Size Replica (ECWBK3) $109.00
Kid-Size Replica (ECWMINI3) $30.00

Cruiserweight /United States /Tag Team/ Heavyweight /TV Championship Belts

Nameplates available: (World Heavyweight Champion only) The Rock, Chris Jericho, Booker T, Ric Flair, Shawn Michaels, Kurt Angle, Triple H, Blank

Deluxe Replica $349.00
Cruiserweight (WCWDB4)
United States (WCWDB3)
Tag Team (WCWDB2)
World Heavyweight (WCWDB1)
World Television (WCWDB5)

Kid-Size Replica $109.00
Cruiserweight (WCWBK4)
World Heavyweight (WCWBK1)
World Television (WCWBK5)

Adult-Size Replica $199.00
Cruiserweight (WCWB4)
United States (WCWB3)
Tag Team (WCWB2)
World Heavyweight (WCWB1)
World Television (WCWB5)
Hardcore (WCWB9)

Mini-Replica $30.00
Cruiserweight (WCWMINI4)
United States (WCWMINI3)
Tag Team (WCWMINI2)
World Heavyweight (WCWMINI1)

World Heavyweight Ultra Deluxe (WCWUDB1) $499.00

Classic Heavyweight Championship 1991-93 Era Belt

Adult-Size Replica (WCWB8) $249.00

Adult-Size & Kid-Size Championship Replica Belts

Adult-size and kid-size exact-scale replicas are made of simulated leather. Each medallion is made of metal and is 2mm thick. The adult-size replica fits up to a 46-inch waist and the kid-size replica fits up to a 34-inch waist.

Mini Championship Replica Belts

The mini-replica belts are made from the same material as the full-size replica belts. Mini-replicas are 12-inches long, and can be used as a wristband or for desktop display.

Deluxe Championship Replica Belts

All deluxe belts are full-size. Straps are made of genuine leather. All medallions are made of metal that is 2mm thick. Each deluxe belt fits up to a 46-inch waist.

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Red (WWEREPLICAMASK05)
White (WWEREPLICAMASK06)
Yellow (WWEREPLICAMASK07)

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Red & White (WWEREPLICAMASK11)
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WrestleMania® 21 Replica Mask
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Victoria™ (WWEJEX014)
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Chris Jericho (WWEJ00303) $15.00 each
Randy Orton (WWEJ00304) $15.00 each
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Undertaker (falling on John Cena) (WWEP035)
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Christy Hemme (studio) (WWEP159)
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Batista (holding belt) (WWEP225)
John Cena (Chain Gang jersey) (WWEP224)
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John Cena (collage) (WWEP219)
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Stacy Keibler (Bra & Panties Match) (WWEP096)
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Miss Jackie (cheerleader) (WWEP095)
Kurt Angle (studio) (WWEP090)
Eddie Guerrero (holding belt) (WWEP092)
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Chris Benoit (doing Crossface) (WWEP0062)
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Rey Mysterio 619 logo pendant (WWEPENDANT017)
Rey Mysterio mask pendant (WWEPENDANT019)
Triple H logo pendant (WWEPENDANT022)
Undertaker devil face 2 pendant (WWEPENDANT021)
John Cena (Word Life) (WWEPENDANT025)
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Rey Mysterio (Mask) (WWEPENDANT045)

Lita (logo) (WWEPENDANT031)
Batista (WWEPENDANT032)
Chris Benoit (4 REAL) (WWEPENDANT034)
Undertaker (symbol) (WWEPENDANT035)
Triple H (symbol) (WWEPENDANT036)
Cena (Word Life logo) (WWEPENDANT037)
Edge (symbol) (WWEPENDANT038)
HBK (crossed swords) (WWEPENDANT039)
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Edge (red logo) (WWEAT405)

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Rey Mysterio (Original) (WWEATTV120)
John Cena (Word Life) (WWEATTV067)
Batista (The Animal) (WWEATTV116)
Triple H (Skull) (WWEATTV118)
Undertaker (Into The Eyes) (WWEATTV119)
Randy Orton (Survive RKO) (WWEATTV115)

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Kid Size (WWEKTEX01)

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Adult Size (WWEATEX03)
Kid Size (WWEKTEX03)

Divas (Fan Club)
Adult Size (WWEATEX04)
Kid Size (WWEKTEX04)

Batista (The Animal)
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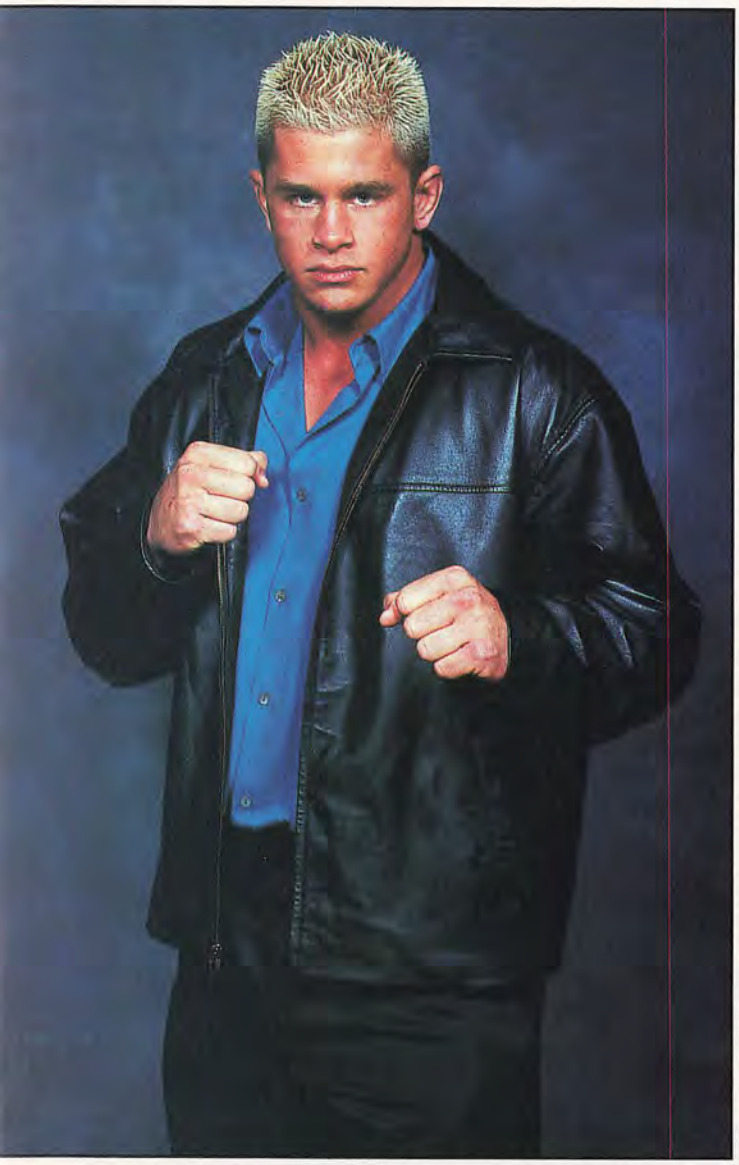
the steel cage

By Jason Langin

DURING A RECENT "Press Conference" for this magazine, "Diamond" Dallas Page jokingly paid me the ultimate compliment by saying something about me joining the cruiserweight division. I consider myself a fairly tough individual, buy I don't really think competing in the ring is a possibility for me.



Daniel Puder—remember him?—won the most recent *Tough Enough* competition—and look where it's gotten him so far. Jason Langin has an idea for a new WWE reality show that would be a bit more fan friendly.

I am also not a buxom beauty with zero knowledge of professional wrestling. So I will not be competing in the Raw diva search trying to seduce Kamala. (Trust me, this is a good thing.)

So what is a non-wrestler/non-beauty to do if he/she wants to get involved with WWE? Well, you could send a letter of interest to WWE. (And you will receive a kind letter back on WWE letterhead from a WWE attorney telling you that you cannot sue the company for using ideas that you might have inspired.) Or you could accost one of the McMahons on the street (which I don't suggest, nor do I think you will ever see get the opportunity to do). Maybe you could work your way up through the independent ranks as a member of a ring crew, a towel boy, or a T-shirt salesman.

But that could be a very long road to travel.

So what if WWE decided to add a new reality program to bring in a regular fan to be its newest do-it-all guy? The winner might become a new announcer, referee, manager, or who knows what. The point is he or she would be getting a paycheck from WWE. Here is my idea to deliver this newest show.

1. Start with a pool of contestants by taking the top 20 fans from the WWE Fantasy online game. If you haven't played this game, you *have* to try it. I am sitting pretty right now in week five in about 35,000th place, which is good considering I started at about 63,000th. You would figure that these 20 folks would at least know their wrestling.

2. But that wouldn't necessarily mean any of these guys/gals has any personality. The next competition would pare the group down to 10. For this portion, each contestant would need to write a speech explaining who should be the next superstar inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame. Then they would need to present their speeches to a panel of HOF judges. *("So in closing, Gov. Ventura, Sgt. Slaughter, and Mr. Rodz, I suggest you give King Kong Bundy some serious consideration. He's big, he's bald, he's just plain Bundy.")* The judges would rate the contestants on content, delivery, and creativity, and the top 10 would move on to the next round. The top score would actually merit an official bid for that former superstar into the Hall.

3. All 10 contestants would next be forced to work an entire week with the WWE ring crews. Half of the competitors would be with the Raw team, the other half with Smackdown. The real ring crews would analyze the work ethic and professionalism of each contestant. One person would get voted off each squad. That'd get us down to eight.

4. The new foursomes would then

To become known as the ultimate WWE fan and land a job of some sort with the company, you'd have to know your WWE trivia. Or so suggests Langin. Do you know the three WWE talk shows that had "shop" in the title? This should give you one of the answers.

be pitted against each other in a huge WWE trivia game, sort of like those high school trivia challenges you see on cable access channels. The wannabes would need to prove their knowledge of the current the sport and its history. The program could be hosted by Lanny "The Genius" Poffo and/or Bobby "The Brain" Heenan. Categories could include "Masked Wrestlers" (*Which NWO member once competed as Max Moon?),* "Talk Shows" *(Which three WWE superstars hosted talk show segments with the word "shop" in the title?),* and "Theme Songs" *(Which Queen song was used as an entrance theme by a future WWE Hall of Famer in the 1980s?).* The top team would move on—four left. (Answers to these questions, by the way, can be found at the end of the column.)

5. Now things would get a little more interesting. The four remaining people would have the chance to take part in a number of competitions. In week one, each of the four would need to call a match on either *Raw* or *Smackdown.* They could be paired randomly with Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Tazz, or Michael Cole. Would they know the difference between a 450 splash and a shooting star press? The next week, they would need to referee a match on *Heat* or *Velocity.* Would the contestants know the tag rope rule?

But the fun would really just be getting started. Next, they would have to serve as a special guest manager for a wrestler drawn at random. Would the potential WWE employee be willing to physically involve himself/herself in an important contest? Would he or she be wise enough to slide the brass knuckles to William Regal or brave enough to trip up a rampaging Kane?

And to top it off, each of the contestants would have to travel one week and be the valet for one of the following superstars: JBL, Kurt Angle, Chris Jericho, or Hardcore Holly. If the person could survive the verbal abuse he or she would be sure to receive that week, he or she would probably deserve a job on pity alone. However, the fans would vote online and the top two vote-getters would move on to the final challenge.

6. One person would work alongside Eric Bischoff, the other alongside Teddy Long to book a *Raw* or *Smackdown* broadcast. Would the person make some great calls for the night (booking a 10-way ladder match for the cruiserweight title), or would he blow it (devoting 30 minutes to interviewing such verbose stars as Chris Benoit or Shelton Benjamin)? Vince McMahon himself would make the final call, with the winner getting a job.

Sounds like fun to me. At least better than watching another Masterlock challenge.

(Trivia answers: Konnan, Jesse Ventura's "Body Shop," Adrian Adonis' "Flower Shop," and Brutus Beefcake's "Barber Shop," and "Another One Bites The Dust" for Junkyard Dog.) □

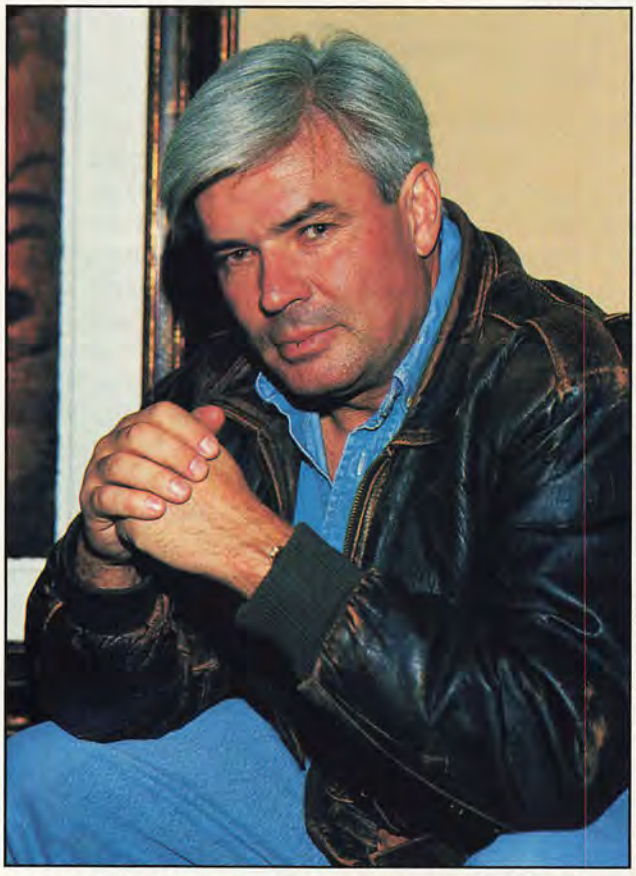
win, lose, or draw

By Harry Burkett

I'VE HEARD A lot of major wrestling news over my telephone, either from our editor-in-chief, Dave Lenker, or other sources, but I never imagined that one of my most interesting scoops would come from someone so close to me.

My girlfriend, Debbie, usually takes a summer job in the resort town of Ocean City, Maryland, which is located about 30 minutes from my hometown. Last year, she took a job serving the continental breakfast at a new hotel in the area. Debbie liked it because she only had to serve muffins, toast, juice, and so forth—easy cleanup, no muss or fuss. The only downside was she had to be there at 5:45 in the morning. On this particular afternoon, she called me with the same standard report I receive every day: the weather, the traffic, and which two of her Chihuahuas weren't getting along.

As I was about to doze off, she suddenly remembered something. "Oh, I almost forgot to tell you. I talked to Eric Bischoff today."



A lot of people might be shocked to find out that Eric Bischoff isn't always as cocky and overbearing as he seems to be on TV every Monday night. Harry Burkett found that out first-hand ... *er,* second-hand ... from his girlfriend.

Eric Bischoff? *H m m m m m m .* Bischoff must have been staying at the hotel. That surprised me because, while the hotel is very nice, I would have expected "Easy E" to stay at a posh resort hotel at which the prices are steeper.

"You mean Eric 'By God' Bischoff?" I asked incredulously. "What happened? Did you bump into him in the hallway?"

"No, he came into the continental breakfast and we talked for about a half-hour—only me and him," she replied flatly.

I couldn't believe it. I thought back to 1995, before I embarked on my exciting career as a wrestling journalist. Two hours before a live *WCW Monday Nitro* was supposed to take place in my area, I happened to run into famed editor and photographer George Napolitano at the local mall. I thought it was a big deal that he asked me where he could purchase film. It turned out that Debbie had stood in line behind Arn Anderson, Kevin Sullivan, and Woman at a department store earlier in the day. She scoops me every time.

Now she had met Eric Bischoff. During my eight years at *PWI,* I haven't had the privilege of talking one-on-one to Bischoff on the phone, let alone in person. Will Welsh interviewed him for a special "Press Conference" once, and Stu Saks has talked to him on occasion, but I've never had the good fortune. But Debbie, who refuses to be anything more than a casual wrestling fan, got to spend 30 minutes with him.

"So, I suppose you told him that your boyfriend writes for a wrestling magazine," I said. Seriously, at this point in my life, I don't need an ego stroke from anyone, but I thought it would have made relevant conversation since she had spent a *half-hour* with him.

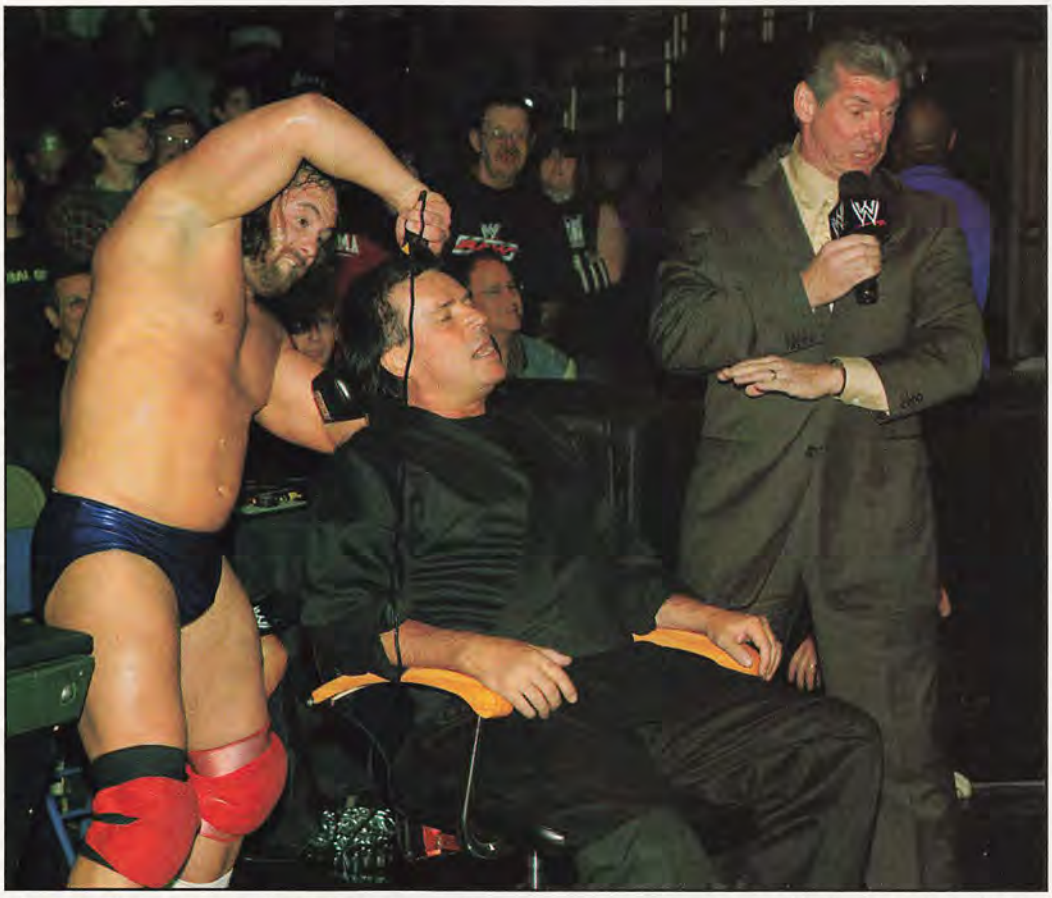
"No, I never got around to it," Debbie answered. *What?* So what were she and "Easy E" talking about that was more important than the supposed center of her world—*me?*

"He just never mentioned wrestling, and there was never a break in the conversation where I felt comfortable bringing it up," she said. "Honestly, we got talking about so many things that it slipped my mind."

Picture this. The continental breakfast is set up in a small dining room, complete with a big screen TV, just off the hotel lobby. It was mid-morning, near the end of Debbie's shift, and in comes Eric Bischoff. He got a muffin and a juice and sat down on a cushy couch near the television. It was a *Munsters* marathon that weekend, so she made sure to have it on *TV Land.*

When Debbie came out of the kitchen and into the dining room, Bischoff tore himself away from *The Munsters* and rose from the couch. He greeted her with a warm smile. "And how are you doing this morning?"

Debbie knew who he was immediately, despite his casual attire. "I was surprised that I wasn't starstruck, but I really wasn't," she said. "He was just so polite and unassuming that I was put at ease right away." This was June 27, 2004, and Bischoff was in town for a Raw house show in nearby Salisbury, Maryland. Yet he never mentioned his name—and he never mentioned wrestling.



Remember how wonderful it was to see Bischoff get his head shaved by Eugene after losing to him at Taboo Tuesday in October. The arrogant jerk got what was coming to him. Well, he's not arrogant to everyone.

Instead, Bischoff explained that he had friends in Ocean City and enjoyed visiting the resort every few years. He recalled, in painstaking detail, how various parts of the waterfront had fallen prey to development. Debbie was amazed at how he seemed to know every nook and cranny of the region. That surprised me, too, considering WCW must have taken him to every part of North America. Isn't this a guy who could probably afford a private plane to Paris?

Bischoff continued with the small talk. He talked about the beach, the weather, and local attractions that had come and gone. "Easy E" asked about a local skateboard manufacturer, and he was fascinated to learn that Debbie had worked there several years earlier. And, if I know my Debbie, she talked on and on like a babbling brook. Bischoff mentioned that he and his wife were headed to Virginia Beach. Actually, that made sense, because The Great American Bash was taking place in Norfolk, Virginia, that evening, and *Raw* was airing from Richmond the following night.

After about a half-hour, Bischoff went back to the lobby to speak with his wife, Lorie, who had been casually sipping orange juice while her husband had been in the dining room. Debbie went back into the kitchen and continued putting away food and supplies. About 10 minutes later, Bischoff entered the kitchen, ignoring the "Employees Only" sign. "Here you go, I want you to have this," he said, forcing her to take seven dollars. Not a bad tip for taking muffins out of a refrigerator.

"I've really enjoyed talking to you today," he said. "Have a great summer."

As Bischoff walked out of the kitchen, he stopped at the door one last time, spun around on his heel, pointed at her with both fingers, and said, "And I want to see you here next year!"

Fortunately, Bischoff refrained from going completely smarmy and putting his index fingers to his dimples. Still, it was a trademark gesture that Debbie had seen "The Bisch" do on *Nitro* and *Raw* many times before. It was just odd being on the receiving end of it.

"He never mentioned his name, didn't talk about wrestling, and never gave the impression he was somebody famous," Debbie recalled. "I'll just remember him as a nice guy who went out of his way to be polite to someone he didn't even know."

And what is the moral of this story? Don't judge people in the wrestling business by their alleged backstage personalities. Did Bischoff hold down Chris Benoit and Chris Jericho? Maybe. Was he cold and calculating toward Ric Flair? Perhaps. But I do know he was friendly and appreciative toward an everyday person working an ordinary job. To me, that's what counts.

Thanks, Eric, for being nice to my lady. □

the straight shooter

By Dan Murphy

THIS BEING THE big *"PWI* 500" issue, I should feel a certain obligation to use this editorial space to weigh in with my thoughts on this year's rankings. But I've spent the better part of the past two months researching and writing bios and, honestly, I'm pretty burned out on the "500."

I'm much more interested in perhaps the most historic "invisible" match of this summer.

On June 26, an outfit called Warrior 1 Wrestling held its first card at the Oshawa Civic Centre in Oshawa, Ontario, and brought in the big guns. Kamala was there, as were WWE Hall of Famer Jimmy Hart and former women's champion Gail Kim (no pun intended with the big guns remark). American Dragon took on Kid Kash and Canadian prospect Extremo in a great three-way, and the Team Canada guys got one of the most spectacular ovations I've ever heard after their match against Sinn and Elvis Ozbourne.

But the main event was the match I came to see. Raven vs. Samoa Joe, with Mick Foley as the special guest referee.

On the surface, this matchup might not seem worthy of an adjective like "historic." After all, no titles were on the line, and now that Raven and Joe are both in TNA, this is a match we'll probably see there eventually. And while Foley gave the match an extra twist, he has been doing the guest ref thing all over the place lately, to the point at which just having Foley on an indy card isn't that big of a deal anymore.

So why is this match worthy of 900-plus words of prime real estate in one of the most well-read issues of *PWI* of the year?

Because of what happened at Slammiversary a week earlier.

At that pay-per-view, Raven came out of nowhere to win the NWA heavyweight title. That meant that Raven—the new NWA champion—was going to fight Samoa Joe—the reigning Ring of Honor pure champion.

Neither of those belts was on the line, and actually neither was publicly acknowledged at the show, but every one of the more than 1,100 fans in the Oshawa Civic Centre knew the score. This felt like an interpromotional dream match taking place on neutral territory. And with Foley as the referee, you had to expect that there would be a clean winner and not the standard double-DQ or no-contest that these champion vs. champion affairs tend to be.

What kind of match was this going to be? Was Raven going to dictate the pace and turn the thing into a "Raven's Rules" streetfight, or was Joe (managed on this night by Hart) going to surprise the veteran from The Bowery with the submission-style he had been honing in ROH? Was there a political dance

Photos By Brad MacDonald

Score one for TNA over Ring of Honor, as Raven put Samoa Joe's shoulders on the mat for a count of three at a Warrior 1 Wrestling event in Ontario recently. Even with Joe now being with TNA as well as ROH, it was about as close as we can get to a big-time interpromotional match in the U.S. today, writes Dan Murphy.

going on behind the scenes between the NWA and ROH (even though Joe has ties to both sides)? Remember, it was only a year ago that TNA barred its contracted talent from wrestling on ROH cards. And which face of Foley were we going to see: the playful sock-waver who cracks jokes, or the King of the Death Match guy who cracks skulls?

It was the rare match that truly captured my imagination. For once, even a jaded wrestling writer like me had no idea what to expect. And that excited me. It was even bigger than NWA vs. ROH. It was also a man who personified ECW against a man who personified ROH. It was the ultimate style clash, in a very good way.

The outcome of the Raven-Joe match truly seemed to be in doubt to The Murph, and that had nothing to do with guest referee Mick Foley, he insists. It was just refreshing to see the NWA champ, who got his hand raised, battling a champion of ROH.

The show's opening segment saw Foley come out to greet the fans and for a lighthearted "showdown" between Mr. Socko and Ed the Sock, a sock puppet who hosts a popular late-night talk show in Toronto (hey, he has more personality than Carson Daly). In the midst of the playful banter between the sock puppets, Samoa Joe burst through the curtain and drilled Foley with a steel chair. Joe's attack was presumably payback for some unkind words Foley had for Joe on some ROH cards a few months back.

But attacking the man assigned to arbitrate your match later in the evening wasn't the wisest idea Joe has ever had. Before the Joe-Raven match could even begin, Foley attacked Joe and bludgeoned him with a series of rights and a running knee in the corner, prompting Raven to grab the house mike and quip, "Mick, you know this is my match, right?"

A frustrated Joe took over on Raven and began using some stiff punches, chops, and knees to leave Raven sagging against the turnbuckles. But Raven reversed Joe by catching him with a drop toehold onto the ropes and then took the battle to the floor, where he pitched Joe full-force into the guardrails, demolishing the barriers and sending fans scampering out of harm's way. After a good four or five minutes of activity outside the ring, Foley went on the mike and counted "one," beginning what could have been the slowest 10-count since the heyday of Bronco Lubich in World Class.

Joe recovered and got in some offense with nasty-looking boot scrapes and a hellacious Yakuza kick when Raven declared the match was officially now a no-DQ affair. Joe looked good, outbrawling Raven for much of the match until "accidentally" missing a clothesline and leveling Foley. That gave Foley his opportunity to fight back, and Joe ended up with a mouthful of Mr. Socko. One evenflow DDT later, Raven was standing tall, arms outstretched in victory.

Have we finally arrived at an era in which interpromotional matches like this can take place once in a while? Have promoters realized these matches can be good for everyone involved, and fans most of all?

The promoters of Warrior 1 did, and I was happy to see it. □

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You're at the airport. You see your favorite wrestler relaxing in one of the terminals. You rush up to him or her as questions fill your excited mind. There are certain things you just *have* to know about this person. Well, these are the 12 questions you'd never think of asking

12 questions

GAIL KIM

If you passed out business cards, would they read, "Gail Kim, wrestler," or "Gail Kim, diva"?

Gail Kim, wrestler. I'm a wrestler first and foremost. I'm really into the athletic part of wrestling. Not that I don't enjoy the entertainment aspect of wrestling, but I'm more into the athletic aspect.

Complete the following sentence: My fans would be surprised to know I spend my spare time ...

I am a heavy-duty shopper, a shopaholic, but that probably wouldn't come as a real surprise to anyone. Probably the big surprise would be that my life isn't entirely wrestling anymore. I have been spending a lot of time on other things, like scuba diving, motocross, and kung fu. I'm just having a great time staying moving.

You are a Canadian of Korean descent. Which do you prefer: back bacon and a Molson, or gal bi (beef short rib in soy sauce)?

I've got to go with the *gal bi*. I'm a huge meat eater, and I'm very proud of my ethnic background. I'm proud to be Korean and love the fact that it sets me apart and makes me different from the other girls.

What's the creepiest request you've ever received from a fan?

Hmmmmmm. There's always the usual pervert requests for custom videos. Mud wrestling, oil wrestling, Jell-o wrestling, and what to wear and what kinds of holds to do, which I'm just not into at all. Then there's the one-line e-mails all the girls seem to get, which is just, "Are your feet ticklish?"

Do you think there's any significance to the fact that the theme song WWE chose for the 2004 diva search was, "Walk Idiot Walk"?

Oh my God, is that really the name of that song? I truly believe WWE is the main company out there, and I feel strongly about the subject of women in wrestling. I think maybe, in the back of their minds, WWE does want idiots. I'm not saying any of the girls are idiots; I've met Christy Hemme and everyone else, and they are all very nice and not idiots at all. It's just that these are girls who don't know anything at all about the business when they come in, and those are the types of women WWE seems to want these days.

You have a choice between Jim Hellwig, Scott D'Amore, and PWI Senior Writer Dan Murphy to live with on a deserted island for the rest of your life. Which would you choose and why?

Probably Scott D'Amore. He's Canadian.

If you could pick any opponent, whom would you like to face in the main event of a WrestleMania and why?

On the male side, Chris Benoit. He's just so intense. He's incredible to watch and never makes a mistake. On the women's side, it would be a tie between Victoria and Nidia. I received the most compliments from my matches with Victoria, and I had my most memorable matches against Nidia.

You used to compete as La Felina. What's your most feline quality?

I don't know. I'm not a catty girl. My trainer gave me that name. Everyone said I was cat-like, and I never really understood why. I guess it's because I'm athletic, like I move like a cat.

You won the women's title in your WWE TV debut. Are you the kind of person who gets a winner every time you buy a scratch-off lottery ticket?

Not at all! I get speeding tickets all the time when I get stopped by a cop, even though I'm a girl. I'm not lucky.

You're driving down the street and you see a German shepherd running loose in traffic. What do you do?

A German shepherd? Leave it there. Does that sound awful? I'm sorry. I'm not a dog person. I'm cat-like, remember? *La Felina.*

It's 3 a.m. and you can't sleep. What do you watch on TV: curling or chat line infomercials?

Neither of those. I always watch The Food Network. I a big fan of food, and it's on 24/7.

You have a hammer, midget, and a roulette wheel. What are your plans for the evening?

Wow, there's really nothing witty I can say about that. I guess I'd break the wheel up with the hammer and make a bonfire so the midget and I could have a bonfire and picnic. But it would be purely platonic, nothing sexual. □

The Wrestling Observer
Hall of Fame

In each issue, *PWI* will honor one member of the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame, which we recognize as the sport's official Hall of Fame

The Road Warriors

THEY SAID THEY snacked on danger and dined on death, and it wasn't too hard to believe them.

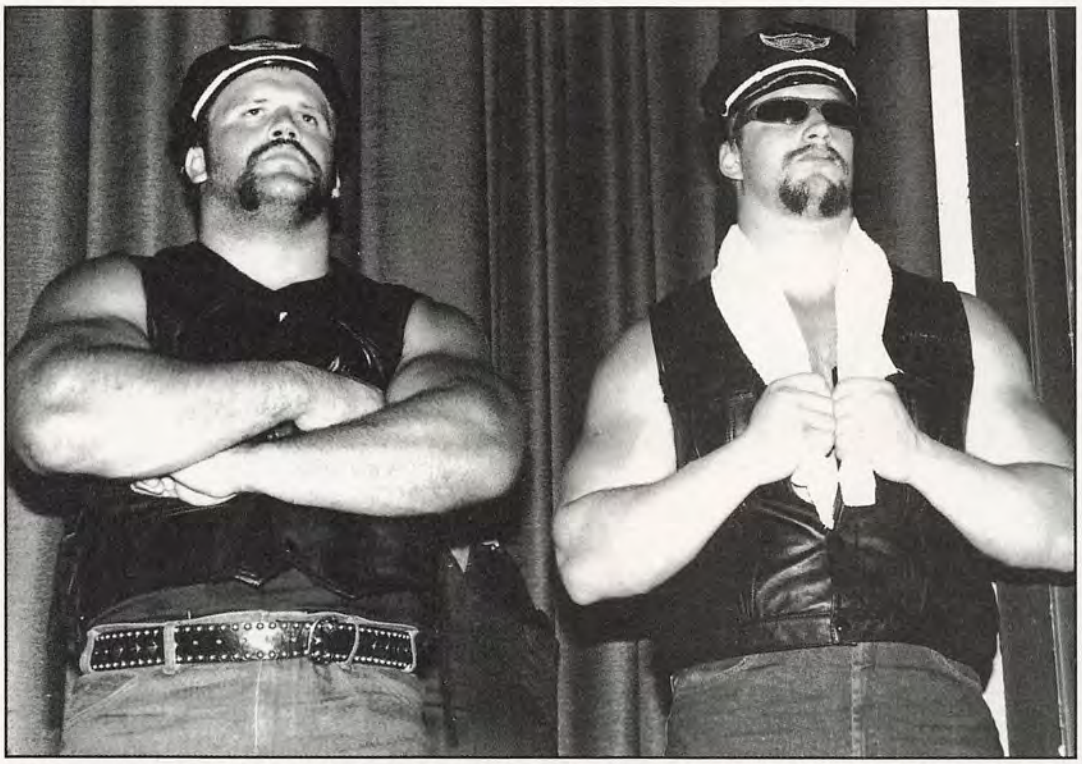
Hawk and Animal, The Road Warriors, were more than the most dominant tag team of a generation. They also revolutionized the sport, ushering in an era of explosive offense, superhuman physiques, and outrageous ring gear.

Michael "Hawk" Hegstrand and Joseph "Animal" Laurinaitis were two bodybuilders who trained in the Minneapolis area under Eddie Sharkey. To set themselves apart, they decked themselves out in biker gear, borrowing heavily from the Mel Gibson film *The Road Warrior*.

On June 11, 1983, the Warriors captured the NWA National tag team title in a tournament. They demolished established teams and created controversy by allowing opponents little offense, building an aura that they were indestructible.

After three runs as NWA National tag champs, the Warriors moved to the AWA, where their reign of terror continued. Led by manager Paul Ellering, they destroyed Baron Von Raschke and The Crusher for their first world tag title on August 25, 1984.

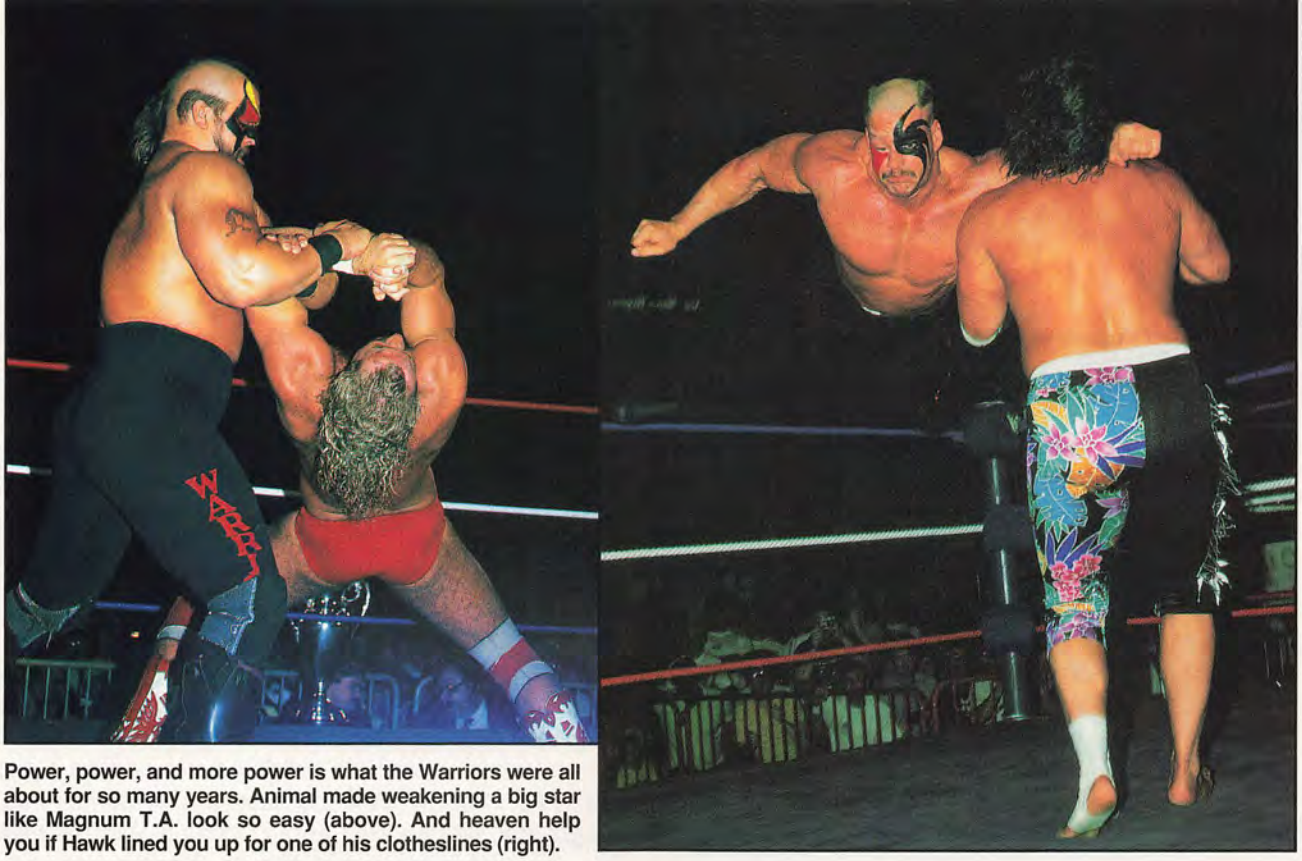
The Warriors were designed to be heels, but an incredible thing began to happen—they began hearing cheers. Fans couldn't help but respect a team that said they were going to beat people up, and then did so.



The Road Warriors didn't look quite so fearsome before they started wearing their famous face paint. Once they settled on the perfect look and perfected their game, though ...

By the time the Warriors jumped to the NWA, they were one of wrestling's hottest commodities. They also became a major attraction in Japan.

Hawk and Animal didn't need title belts for the fans to know they were the best. It wasn't until October 29, 1988, when the Warriors—fresh off a heel turn against Sting—finally won the



Power, power, and more power is what the Warriors were all about for so many years. Animal made weakening a big star like Magnum T.A. look so easy (above). And heaven help you if Hawk lined you up for one of his clotheslines (right).

gold, beating The Midnight Express. The Warriors were voted Tag Team of the Year by *PWI* readers a record four times during the 1980s, and were named Tag Team of the Decade for the 1980s by the editors.

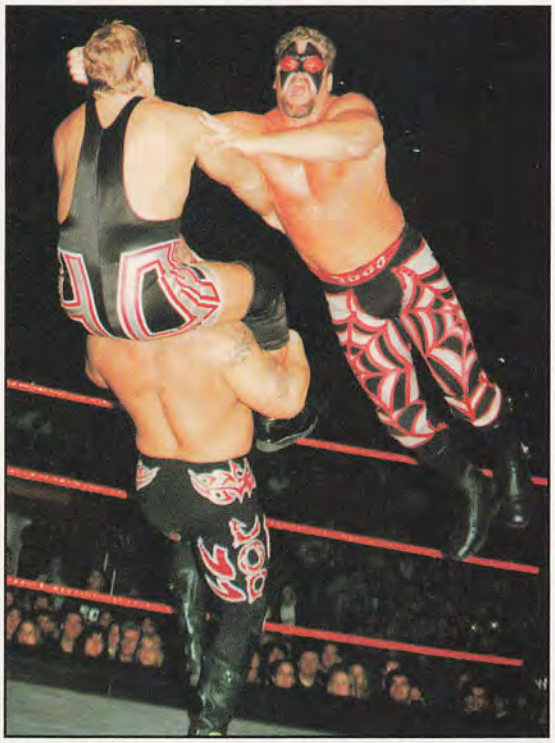
In the summer of 1990, Hawk and Animal finally signed with the WWF for a long-awaited feud with Demolition. Billed as The Legion of Doom, Hawk and Animal dominated the competition for the following year until they finally got a shot at the WWF tag title at SummerSlam 1991. They made the most of that match, beating The Nasty Boys to become the first—and only—team ever to win the WWF, NWA, and AWA world tag belts.

The Warriors struggled in the 1990s, but still had moments of greatness. They left the WWF for Japan in 1992 ... until Animal injured his back, prompting Hawk to do the unthinkable and team with someone else, Kensuke Sasaki. The Roadies reunited in WCW in early-1996, feuding with Sting and Lex Luger before returning to the WWF the following year. They captured the WWF tag title once more in October 1997, but lost it to The New Age Outlaws the next month.

The WWF attempted to revamp the Warriors' image, christening them LOD 2000 and pairing them with Tammy Sytch, and then adding Darren Drosdov as a third member, but the changes never took. Even Hawk's private battle with drugs and alcohol became fodder for storylines, culminating in a controversial attempted suicide/attempted murder angle that saw Droz push a despondent Hawk off the top of the TitanTron.

In more recent years, the Warriors wrestled periodically on the independent circuit and in Japan, and made a few appearances in WWE and TNA. On October 19, 2003, Hegstrand died in his sleep at the age of 46, officially closing the book on The Road Warriors. Animal has recently returned to WWE, teaming with Heidenreich.

The Warriors have left a legacy of dominance, from kicking out of piledrivers when such a thing didn't happen to demolishing opponents in less than a minute; no one did it better than Hawk and Animal. □



Even as they appeared older, slower, and more vulnerable during their last big run in the WWF together, these big bullies from Chicago were dangerous. Their doomsday device usually ended their matches in a hurry.

independent roundup

By Liz Hunter

A LOT OF negative news to report from the indy scene this month, at least as far as the big stories are concerned.

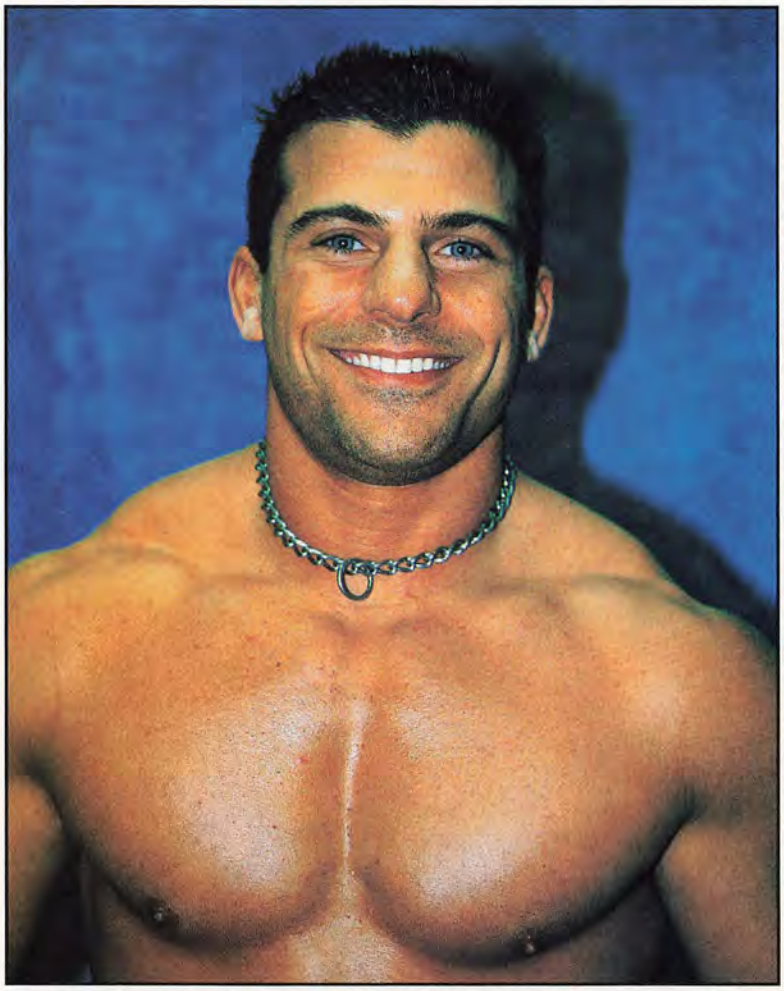
First off, New York-based independent wrestler **Matt Striker** (real name **Matthew Kaye**) made news all over the world when he lost his social studies teaching job in Queens when it was discovered that he had used sick days to cover wrestling bookings.

Striker, who gained some fame in Philadelphia-based 3PW last year by doing hilarious impressions of such superstars as **Randy Savage** and **The Ultimate Warrior**, was caught when pictures of him competing for Zero-One in Japan in December 2004 during a period in which he claimed he was sick were discovered on his personal Web site. He ultimately resigned from his job, though he claimed he didn't realize at the time that there was a difference between sick days and personal days.

Striker has offered to pay back the sick pay and accept a suspension in hopes of getting reinstated.

"I didn't deposit my last check because I thought that would be a show of my intention," he told *Newsday*. "I told them I'd work overtime without pay. I told them I'd do anything to keep my job."

If he isn't reinstated, it's possible he could land a gig with WWE. Shortly after the story broke, Striker was brought in to wrestle **Kurt Angle** twice on *Raw* (he had previously lost to him on *Smackdown),* and Angle even mentioned the controversy before the match and berated him for it. Striker looked very good in the ring in both losses to the former Olympian.



New York independent wrestler Matt Striker got a lot of mainstream press for all the wrong reasons when he lost his teaching job for reasons very wrestling-related. He could end up turning a negative into a positive.

Kurt Lauder, who wrestles on the Canadian independent circuit as **"The Career Killer" Kurt Lauderdale**, was charged with the first-degree murder of 16-year-old **Shana Poissant** after human remains were found in a heavily wooded area outside Montreal two weeks after Poissant went missing.

Lauder had been questioned before the body was discovered because of reports that Poissant had last been seen in a pickup truck that looked like his. When previously asked by a TV reporter what happened to Poissant, Lauder said, "I dropped her off," before slamming a door in the reporter's face.

Lauder's mother, **Suzanne Lauder-Grosser**, was charged with being an accessory to the murder after the fact, while his father, **Ian**, was expected to be similarly charged, although he became ill and had to be taken to a hospital when he was arrested.

A California jury deliberated for less than a day before finding the All Pro Wrestling school liable for reckless behavior in the death of 27-year-old student **Brian Ong** in 2001. His family was awarded $1.34-million in the judgment.

Ong, who started in the promotion's beginners camp in March 2001, died on May 28, 2001, after being asked to volunteer to

receive a flapjack from 7', 400-pound **Dalip Singh**, who was also being trained at the time and then thought to be a potential future superstar. He suffered a head injury and felt woozy after taking the first bump, then was killed after taking the second bump.

Quick title changes: New Age Wrestling Alliance, Gladewater, TX, July 24: **Gemini** defeated heavyweight champion **Robert Evans** to win the title ... ***Professional Championship Wrestling, Arlington, TX, July 23:*** **Canyon** and **Jack Dalton** beat **Apocalypse** and **Damien** to win the tag team title ... ***NWA Rocky Top, Knoxville, TN, July 23:*** **Brad Thomas** beat **John Noble** to become the first NWA Rocky Top X division champion ... **Dennis Condrey** and **Bobby Eaton** beat **Rick Morton** and **Tracey Smothers** to become the first NWA Rocky top tag team champions ... **Tom Prichard** beat **Jimmy Golden** to become the first NWA Rocky Top heavyweight champion ... ***American Championship Wrestling, Marshall, TX, July 23:*** **Maverick** beat hardcore champion **Bruiser** to win the title ... ***Rose City Championship Wrestling, Richmond, IN, July 23:*** **Riot** beat **Brandon Prophet** in a hardcore match for the x-treme championship ... ***ACPW, Salemburg, NC, July 23:*** **Sean Cruise** beat light heavyweight champion **Gary Tater** to win the title ... **Zane Dawson** won the heavyweight title in a four-way ladder match against **Tre G**, **Dr. Love**, and **Charlie Dreamer** ... ***Border City Wrestling, Oldcastle, Ontario, July 22:*** **Bobby Rude** pinned heavyweight champion **A-1** to win the title ... **Phil Atlas** and **Jimmy Jacobs** defeated **N8 Mattson** and **Danny Daniels** to win the tag team title ... ***Pure Wrestling Association, Goderich, Ontario, July 22:*** **Buck 10** defeated **Flatline**, **Warhed**, **Shawn Brown**, and **Marc Mandrake** to win the pure violence title ... **Reggie Marley** defeated **Jeff Black** to win the pure wrestling title ... ***World of Hurt Wrestling, Hudson Falls, NY, July 22:*** **Punk** defeated **Jim Tanner** for the hardcore title in a loser-leaves-WOHW match ... **Shane Alden** and **Virus** defeated **Swinger Sidusky** and **Reed James** to win the tag team title ... **Nick Neighborhood** defeated **Danger** to win the heavyweight title... ***Championship Wrestling Productions, Mineral Wells, TX, July 17:*** **Joey Corman** won a three-way ladder match against **Jason Black** and cruiserweight champion **Chuck Murphy** to win the title ... ***Iron Ring Wrestling, Kingsport, TN, July 17:*** **C.C. Rockett** beat **The Superstar** to win the international title ... ***Empire Wrestling Federation, San Bernardino, CA, July 16:*** **Bino Gambino** defeated **Lyger Rivera** to become EWF cruiserweight champion ... ***Jersey All Pro Wrestling, Rahway, NJ, July 16:*** **The Backseat Boys** defeated **Jack Evans** in a handicap match to win the JAPW tag title ... ***All Star Championship Wrestling, Charlotte, NC, July 16:*** **Jason Jones** defeated heavyweight champion **George South Jr.** to win the title ... ***PWF Mayhem, Quincy, MA, July 15:*** **Dan Freitas** and **Brian Nunes** defeated tag team champs **Evan Siks** and **Matt Storm** in a streetfight to win the title ... ***Pro Wrestling Entertainment, Mechanicsburg, PA, July 12:*** **Icarus** and **Gran Akuma** beat tag champions **Mike Quackenbush** and **Hallowicked** in a best-of-three-falls match to win the title ... **Larry Sweeney** beat heavyweight champion **Glen Osbourne** to win the title ... ***CWF/AWA Mid-Atlantic, Burlington, NC, July 9:*** **Garry Stevens** pinned **Ric Converse** to win the Mid-Atlantic heavyweight title ... ***New Generation Wrestling, Fort Worth, TX, July 9:*** **Blade** beat **Synnamon** to win the heavyweight title. □

Bobby Rude considers A-1 an ally in TNA, as both are affiliated with Team Canada. Not so much in Border City Wrestling, in which Rude beat A-1 for the heavyweight title.

the international report

By Mike Spillane

IN NEWS THAT shocked the *puroresu* world, **Shinya Hashimoto**, one of the most important figures in modern Japanese wrestling, died of a brain hemorrhage on July 11. One of the legendary **Three Musketeers**, along with **Masahiro Chono** and **Keiji "Great Muta" Muto**, Hashimoto rose to fame in the heavyweight ranks of New Japan Pro Wrestling. Feared for his brutal kicks and skull-crushing offense centered around DDTs and brainbusters, Hashimoto first captured the top title of New Japan—the IWGP heavyweight championship—in September 1993. His third and final IWGP title win, over **Nobuhiko Takada** in April 1996, drew a record-breaking crowd that still stands as one of the largest live gates in pro wrestling history.

By the late-1990s, Hashimoto was embroiled in a feud with top *judokan* **Naoya Ogawa**, and their matches, which were more like fights, culminated in a forced retirement for Hashimoto. However, rather than hang up the tights, he founded Zero-One Fighting Athlete, a promotion separate from New Japan, but a company many thought would serve simply as a new version of the NWO in *puroresu*. Zero-One was not merely some storyline element, and ran independently for several years before being buried in debt. The promotion folded under the weight of its financial debt at the close of 2004, later replaced by **Shinjiro Otani's** similarly themed Zero-One Max.

Through the first six-plus months of 2005, Hashimoto was sidelined by shoulder surgery, trying to rehabilitate for a future return to the ring that, tragically, would never happen. Years of the hard-hitting Japanese strong style had taken their toll on the popular star, and the surgery became a much-delayed inevitability. A brain hemorrhage took the life of the decorated performer during his recuperation period; the 40-year-old was also a former All-Japan Triple Crown champion and a former IWGP tag team titleholder.

The third incarnation of **Black Tiger** is no more. A few months ago, New Japan introduced a fourth Black Tiger to rival the current **Tiger Mask**, who is the fourth in the line of legendary junior heavyweights. This left **Black Tiger III**, portrayed by Mexican standout **Silver King**, in a bit of a quandary. There had never been two simultaneous versions of the evil brother of Tiger Mask before, so it seemed as if the days of the third incarnation were numbered. Silver King, who had toured semi-regularly with New Japan just a few years ago, had not been called back to Asia in some time, while **Black Tiger IV** quickly climbed to prominence.

Shinya Hashimoto and Keiji Muto (a.k.a. The Great Muta) broke into the sport together in Japan and were two of the dominant heavyweights of the 1990s. A brain hemorrhage took the life of Hashimoto in July as he prepared to make a comeback following shoulder surgery. He was just 40.

Black Tiger III, who primarily wrestled for CMLL, eventually relinquished the role and recently re-debuted in Mexico City, not as Silver King, but as **Bronco**. He has teamed with recent CMLL ar-

rival **Elektro**, the former AAA star previously known as **Electro Shock**. Skeptical CMLL fans have been reluctant to accept the new duo thus far. With Electro Shock and his wife, **Lady Apache**, now in CMLL, AAA has balanced the trade wars by acquiring hot undercard stars **Zumbido** and **Alan Stone** from the CMLL roster.

Three of Pro Wrestling NOAH's top stars will be in the United States by the time you read this. **Kenta Kobashi**, his protege, **KENTA**, and KENTA's tag team partner, **Naomichi Marufuji**, were scheduled to visit **Harley Race's** WLW camp in Missouri to conduct a week-long seminar and tryouts for American wrestlers. NOAH has found success utilizing the talents of American wrestlers like **Scorpio**, **Michael Modest**, **Donovan Morgan**, and **Ace Steel** almost since its inception. After his stay at WLW ends, Kobashi is scheduled for an appearance with Ring of Honor, but few details regarding that situation were available at press time. This will mark Kobashi's first wrestling appearance in the United States. The 17-year pro is one of the most celebrated heavyweights of the last two decades. His epic two-year run as NOAH's Global Honored Crown champion cemented him as one of the premiere athletes active in the sport today.

And you thought the Lex Luger-Sting feud all but ended with the demise of WCW. Not so fast! There could be another chapter or two added to it ... in Puerto Rico of all places!

The recently crowned "King Of DDT," **KUDO**, has already arrived for a three-month tour of the United States. The small Dramatic Dream Team company (DDT for short) has sent this young star to America to gain some seasoning and experience. In his first match stateside, he defeated **Eddie Kingston** on a card for IWA East Coast, and was set for action in CHIKARA's third annual Young Lions Cup Tournament. KUDO, the former partner of **Mikami**, participated in the Differ Cup Tag Team Tournament a couple of years back and has become an independent cult favorite since. As the likes of Naoya Ogawa and **Minoru Fujita** did during similar visits to the U.S. in the past, KUDO plans to use his American tour to build momentum toward a triumphant and successful return home. He heads back to Japan in October, where he will resume the hunt for the DDT tag team title with current partner **HERO**.

Intocable, a handsome young wrestler from Mexico's AAA promotion, broke his neck in a July match opposite the impostor **Psicosis**. The whiplash from a dropkick between the shoulder blades seemed to have been the culprit, and doctors had originally speculated that Intocable (real name **Rene Gomez**) would never walk again. After surgery to replace destroyed vertebrae in his spinal column, the outlook changed for the better. Although it is far from certain, it is not only possible that Intocable might walk again, but could possibly wrestle again at some point. Intocable, which means "The Untouchable," takes his name from a popular *norteno* band and is known for his exotic dance routine that is similar to fellow AAA wrestler **Latin Lover's**. He first rose to fame on AAA television programs under the name **Randy**.

The Puerto Rican wrestling scene is about to undergo a major change, if newly formed Gladiator Championship Wrestling has its way. The new promotion was scheduled to run its first show in late-July, and has announced several of the names on its roster: **Lex Luger**, **Rick Steiner**, **Road Warrior Animal**, **The Warlord**, **The Barbarian**, **Jake "The Snake" Roberts,** and former WCW and NWA headliner **Sting**. A company so rich in star power could prove to be major trouble for Puerto Rican mainstays like **Carlos Colon's** World Wrestling Council and the IWA, owned by **Victor Quinones**.

German independent standout **Chris the Bambi Killer** has been active in Europe for years. Now, after a few shorts stints with Japan's Wrestle Aid, he is about to embark on the biggest opportunity of his career. In August, he was set to partake in Zero-One Max's Fire Festival, also set to include **Takao Omori**, **Masato Tanaka**, **Kensuke Sasaki**, and six others. With some of the most respected names in *puroresu* participating in the most-anticipated Fire Festival to date, Chris will have a chance to show the world what European fans have known for years. □

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Oct. 1990: Sting: "I Feel Like I've Conquered The World!" Also: Legion of Doom, Bushwhackers, El Gigante, Mike Rotundo, Juice Patrol.

Nov. 1990: Ric Flair & Hulk Hogan: A Tale Of Two Ex-Champions. Also: Sid Vicious, Sgt. Slaughter, Jeannie-Toni, Mr. Fuji & Orient Express.

Dec. 1990: Halloween Havoc Horror! Why Sting Is Spooked By Sid Vicious. Also: Hulk Hogan, Kerry Von Erich, Jim Cornette, Larry Zbyszko.

Jan. 1991: Warning To The Ultimate Warrior: The Legion Of Doom Will Lead You To Destruction. Also: Paul E. Dangerously, Chris Adams, Steiners, Lawler-T. Funk.

Feb. 1991: Our Plan For The "Hulkster" To Regain The WWF World Belt. Also: Terry Taylor, Rick Martel, Sting & Simmons, all-annoying, Stan Hansen.

March 1991: The Earthquake Feud Rumbles On: Will Hulk Hogan Be The Victim Of His Own Deadly Obsession? Also: Roberts-Martel, Sting-Hansen, Keirn-Perez, Barry Windham.

April 1991: The Steiners: They'd Be Wrestling's Greatest Tag Team, But ... Also: Eddie Gilbert, Flair-Sting, Steiners, Roddy Piper, Larry Zbyszko, Sgt. Slaughter.

June 1991: Steiners, LOD: Tag Team Thunder. Also: Steve Williams, Nikita Koloff, I-C belt, Dundees, Arn Anderson.

July 1991: Hogan's Burning Mad! Beating Slaughter For The Title Was Not Enough. Also: Virgil, Nastys, Steiners, Dan Spivey, Terry Funk.

Aug. 1991: Are The Steiners Getting Too Cocky For Their Own Good? Also: Jerry Lawler, Rick Steamboat, Warrior-Undertaker, Dustin Rhodes. Flair-Windham.

Sept. 1991: Justice Is In The WWF ... And Hogan's In The Biggest Trouble Of His Life! Also: Missy-Paul E., Rick Rude, Curt Hennig, Stevie Ray, Diamond Exchange.

Oct. 1991: Exclusive Preview & Analysis: SummerSlam '91. Also: Savage & Liz, Hogan & Warrior, Leg Luger, Santana-Atlas, Steve Williams, Studd-Zenk.

Nov. 1991: Our Investigation Reveals ... The Truth Behind The Hogan-Savage Connection. Also: Lex Luger, Ric Flair, War Games, Mounties, foreign objects.

Dec. 1991: A Night To Remember: SummerSlam Provides Heat For The Cold Months Ahead. Also: Alexandra York, Simmons-Luger, Lane & Cornette, Leatherface.

Jan. 1992: INSIDE WRESTLING Reveals: Sting's Memo From A Maniac! Also: Freebirds, Blackhearts, Bret Hart, Dusty Rhodes, Mike Rotundo.

March 1992: Who's Winning The Hogan-Flair Wars? Also: Steiners, Survivor Series, Enforcers-Rhodes & Steamboat, Johnny B. Badd.

May 1992: War! WrestleMania Will Be Sid And Hulk's Battleground. Also: Jushin Liger, Eddie Gilbert, Repo Man, Austin-Blossom, Tri-State & UWF.

June 1992: Sting: A New Champion, A New Era. Also: Hulk Hogan, Harley Race, Marcus Bagwell, Tony Atlas, IRS & DiBiase.

July 1992: Is Regaining The WWF Title An Impossible Undertaking? Also: Sherri & Shawn, Big Van Vader, Gordy & Williams, Kamala, Joe Savoldi.

Aug. 1992: The Closer Flair Gets ... The More Savage "Macho Man" Becomes. Also: Jack-Badd, Brian Christopher, LOD & Ellering, Taylor & Valentine, Dusty Wolfe.

Sept. 1992: Hulk Hogan's "Retirement": Why The WWF Will Never Let Him Rest In Peace. Also: War Games, Big Van Vader, Kamala, Marty Jannetty, U.K.

Oct. 1992: SummerSlam '92: Exclusive Preview & Analysis. Also: S. Steiner-Muta, Ron Simmons, Eddie Gilbert, Eric Embry.

Nov. 1992: The Great American Crash: Vader Crushes Sting For The WCW World Title. Also: Ric Flair, Ultimate Warrior, Madusa, Warlord & Barbarian-Bushwhackers, top rope rule.

Dec. 1992: Hey, Ric Flair: Stop Whining And Start Winning. Also: Razor Ramon, Heavenly Bodies, Jeff Jarrett, Windham & D. Rhodes, NWA title.

March 1993: Who Controls The Balance Of Power In The WWF? Also: Shawn Michaels, Nikita Koloff, Windham-Dustin, Survivor Series, Rod Price.

April 1993: New Blood! The Wrestlers Who Could Revitalize The WWF In '93. Also: Z-Man & Gunn, Sting-Vader, Dangerous Alliance, Ric Flair.

May 1993: Exclusive WrestleMania IX Match Analysis. Also: Andre the Giant, Pillman & Austin, Great Muta, Headshrinkers-Steiners, 2 Cold Scorpio.

Jan. 1994 (Special Edition): Wrestling's Seasonal Spectaculars—WWF SummerSlam, WCW Fall Brawl. Also: Rick Martel, Razor Ramon, Steven Regal, Paul Orndorff, Mascaras-Liger, ECW baseball bat matches.

May 1994: Lex Luger & Bret Hart: Their Greatest Triumphs, Their Gravest Tragedies. Also: Flair-Rude, Rick Morton, Heenan-Bockwinkel, Brian Christopher, Yoko-Booger.

June 1994: Wake Up, Rick Steamboat: Ric Flair Is Still "Slick" Ric! Also: Jimmy Snuka, Tony

Anthony, IRS, Bruise Brothers, Alundra Blayze, Freebirds.

July 1994 (Special Issue): A Look Into Wrestling's Future: You Won't Believe What You'll See! Also: Ron Simmons, Sting, Earthquake-Booger, Bob Armstrong, Diesel.

Oct. 1994 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Doink, Vader-Race, Mabel, Dory Funk Jr., Owen-Bret, Hall of Fame.

March 1995: Predictions 1995. Also: Nastys, Razor Ramon, Tasmaniac, Kid-Man O' War, Pillman & Hogan.

June 1995: The Beginning Of The End? Will Hulk Hogan Get Burned By Friendly Fire? Also: Steve Austin, Gangstas, Public Enemy, Bret-Owen, Jeff Jarrett.

Oct. 1995 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Randy Savage, Bret & Cactus, Sting, Diesel, Hawk.

Nov. 1995: One Defense In Four Months?! Strip Hulk Hogan Of The Title—Now! Also: Alex Wright, Tatanka, King of Ring, Chris Benoit, Backlund-Clinton.

Jan. 1996: Our Holiday Wish List For 1996! Also: Scott Norton, Sid Vicious, Psicosis-Misterio, Barry Horowitz, Sabu.

Feb. 1996: Wrestling's Top Stars: What 1996 Has In Store For Them! Also: Goldust, Sherri-Parker, Mikey Whipwreck, Smokin' Gunns.

March 1996: His Excellency! How Bret Masterminded Diesel's Execution. Also: Jeff Jarrett, Giant, Jim Cornette, Survivor Series, Eddie Guerrero.

June 1996: Luger Or Hogan? If Sting Makes The Wrong Choice, He's Through! Also: Road Warriors, Roddy Piper, Ahmed Johnson, Raven, Al Snow

Aug. 1996: The Greening Of Wrestling: How Sting & Shawn Will Become $50,000,000 Men! Also: Bodydonnas, Giant, Guerrera-Misterio, George Steele, Goldust & Marlena.

Oct. 1996 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Jake Roberts, Yokozuna, Giant-Konnan, Ahmed Johnson, Chris Jericho, strutters.

Nov. 1996: The Steiners: Feasting On A Buffet Of Violence. Also: Shawn Michaels, Sabu-Douglas, King of Ring, Eddie Guerrero, truck stop terror.

Dec. 1996: Three Women For Four Horsemen? The Hot Search For A Fourth Filly Has Begun! Also: Sunny & Gunns, Giant, Goldust, Cornette & Hart, Jerry Jarrett.

Holiday 1996 (Special Issue): The Tombstone: Wresling's Deadliest Finisher. Also: 1997 calendar, "Pyscho" Sid, Benoit-Misterio, Steiners-NWO, Pit Bull I, Jushin Liger.

Feb. 1997: Trouble In Egoville: Is There An NWO Within The NWO? Also: Chris Candido, Bret-Shawn, Ric Flair, Joey Styles, Liger-Benoit.

June 1997: Ahmed Johnson Reveals: "I Almost Joined The Nation Of Domination." Also: Mankind, Lex Luger, NWO, Davey Boy Smith, Jerry Graham.

Oct. 1997 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: LOD-PG-13, Rob Van Dam, Flair & Horsemen, Ken Shamrock, McMichael-White, Madd & Mama Maxxine.

Nov. 1997: WWF War Zone: Interfederation Battles Rock The Sport! Also: Ahmed Johnson, Curt Hennig, *Nueva* World Order, Chris Candido, Dan Severn.

Dec. 1997: Losing Is Bull! Has Dennis Rodman Had It With Hulk Hogan? Also: Steve Austin, Jarrett & Debra, Harts, Funk-Francine, Chris Jericho.

Holiday 1997 (Special Issue): The Steiners' Million-Dollar Gamble! Also: 1998 calendar, Alex Wright, The Patriot, Sgt. Slaughter, Turnbuckle Turkey Awards.

Feb. 1998: Wrestling's Top Stars: What's Ahead For '98. Also: Brian Pillman, Sting, Hunter Hearst Helmsley, Reckless Youth.

March 1998: Hart Transplant! The Truth Behind Bret's Defection To WCW. Also: Steve McMichael, Bam Bam Bigelow, Steve Austin, Disco Inferno.

April 1998 (Special Issue): The 1998 INSIDE WRESTLING Computer Tournament. Also: Scott Hall, Marlena, Chris Benoit, Gunn & James, Sabu-Sandman.

May 1998: Is The WWF Screwing Another Hart? Also: Steve Austin, Dallas Page, Booker T, Larry Zbyszko, Al Snow.

June 1998: Exclusive! Steve Austin: The 10 Men Who Inspired His Toughness. Also: Dusty & Dustin, Perry Saturn, Mortis, Jeff Jarrett.

July 1998 (Special Issue): Top Stars Answer Your Personal Questions. Also: Jericho-Misterio Jr., Steve Austin, Sunny, Scott Steiner, Christopher-Michinoku.

Aug. 1998: WrestleMania XIV: The *Real* Winners And Losers. Also: Sunny, Curt Hennig, Dan Severn, Ultimo Dragon.

Sept. 1998: Power Surge! While The NWO Fiddles ... These Men Are Burning. Also: Sable, Ultimo-Guerrero, DeGeneration X-Owen, Rocky Maivia, Mad Russian-Rambo.

Oct. 1998 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Steve Austin, Taka Michinoku, Al Snow, Hollywood Hogan, Roddy Piper, Misawa-Kawada.

Nov. 1998: Austin vs. Goldberg: Who Would Win And Why. Also: Bret Hart, Dude Love, Junkyard Dog, Helmsley-Michaels, Ray-Booker.

Dec. 1998: DDP's Big Bang Theories: Cutting Loose On Life, Love, & The Ultimate Buzz. Also: Sable-Jackie, Mankind, Hogan-Horace, D-Lo, APW.

Holiday 1998 (Special Issue): Kane: Still Haunted By His Day Of Glory. Also: Eddie Guerrero, Stevie Ray, Val Venis, Turnbuckle Turkey Awards, bonus calendar.

Jan. 1999: Seasons Greetings With A Bang (DDP & Kimberly). Also: Severn-Shamrock, Konnan, Arn, Undertaker-Kane, Chris Jericho.

March 1999: Estrange Situation! Insider Reveals: "Shane Still Resents His Father! Also: X-Pac, Hogan-Warrior, Jesse Ventura, Billy Kidman, Scott Norton.

April 1999 (Special Issue): The 1999 INSIDE WRESTLING Computer Tournament. Also: Bossman-McMahon, Steiner & Bischoff, Hollywood Hogan, Wrath, Blue Meanie.

May 1999: Team Corporate's WrestleMania Scare! Mankind's Title Victory Could Have Spoiled Everything! Also: New Age Outlaws, Eddie Guerrero, Triple-H, Bill Goldberg.

June 1999: Still In-Vince-Ible! What Will It Take To Topple This Man? Also: Rey Misterio Jr., ECW, Triple-H, NWO, Blue Meanie.

July 1999 (Special Issue): Top Stars Answer Your Personal Questions. Also: Vince McMahon, Vincent, Eric Bischoff, Giant Baba.

Aug. 1999: WrestleMania XV: The *Real* Winners And Losers! Also: Vam Dam-Lynn, Saturn, Goldust, Steiner-Bagwell.

Oct. 1999 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Mankind & Shamrock, Snow-Holly, Sting, Edge, Flair-Robinson, AIWF.

Nov. 1999: Crash At The Bash! Enter Sid, Viciously! Also: Undertaker-Austin, Acolytes, Master P, Debra, Justin Credible.

Dec. 1999: The Rock: What Makes You Love/Hate This Man? Also: Sting, Shane Douglas, Droz, Piper-Bagwell, Taz.

Holiday 1999 (Special Issue): The 1999 Turnbuckle Turkey Awards. Also: Sting, Dogg-Gunn, Undertaker, Steve Corino, 2000 calendar.

Jan. 2000: Dreaming Of An Extreme Christmas (Tommy Dreamer & Francine). Also: Goldberg, Al Snow, Billy Gunn, Doring & Road Kill, cigar-chompers.

Feb. 2000: Wrestling's Top Stars: What's Ahead For 2000! Also: Vince-Bulldog, Mike Awesome, Sid Vicious, Gorilla Monsoon.

March 2000: Kevin Nash & Scott Hall: Getting Inside The Outsiders' Heads. Also: Dudleys, Jerry Lynn, Vince-DX, Kimberly, Zero Gravity.

April 2000 (Special Issue): The Y2K Computer Tournament. Also: Jarrett-PTB, Christopher & Taylor, Lou E. Dangerously, Lawler-Fantastico.

May 2000: Hey, Scott, Watch Your Back! The NWO Is Setting You Up! Also: Hacksaw Duggan, Rikishi Phatu, Test, Mike Awesome.

June 2000: Chris Jericho's Deadliest Enemy: His Ego! Also: Tazz, Kidman-Torrie, Nash-Funk, Buff Bagwell, New Jack.

July 2000 (Special Issue): It's True! Kurt Angle Will Be Hotter Than The Rock In Six Months! Also: Elizabeth, Steve Blackman, Norman Smiley, Spike Dudley, personal questions.

Aug. 2000: WrestleMania 2000: The *Real* Winners & Losers! Also: Dustin-Funk, Eddie Guerrero, ECW extreme?, WCW analysis.

Sept. 2000: Those Damn Dudleys! Is There An Evil Act Fans Won't Cheer? Also: Billy Kidman, Taka Michinoku, Yoshihiro Tajiri, Jeff Jarrett.

Oct. 2000 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Kurt Angle, Malenko-Saturn, Lance Storm, Tori, Jumbo Tsuruta, ECW headliners.

Nov. 2000: When Will Triple-H Proclaim ... "I'm Sick Of Being A McMahon!" Also: Trish Stratus, Shane Douglas, Hulk Hogan, Kevin Nash, Yoshihiro Tajiri.

[FULL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH JANUARY 2001]

Jan. 2001: Olympic Games: What Kind Of Angle Has Curt Been Running? Also: Tazz-Lawler, Big Vito, Stacy Keibler, Chris Benoit, Kid Kash, Chyna.

March 2001: Who Knows The Rock's Role? Is He Ditching Wrestling For Hollywood? Also: Trish Stratus, Billy Gunn, Jarrett-Sting, C.W. Anderson, Booker T.

May 2001: The WrestleMania Tip Sheet: What You Must Know About The Event Of The Year! Also: Scott Steiner, Dudleys, Malenko & Lita, Shane Douglas, Raven.

Aug. 2001: Game Face! We Haven't Seen Hunter's Ugly Side ... But Just Wait! Also: WWF vs. WCW, Kurt Angle, Vince McMahon, Booker T, Hardys & Lita, Haas brothers, WCW babes.

Oct. 2001: Will Debra Ice Stone-Cold? Also: Vince vs. Shane, Chyna, William Regal, former Big Three stars.

Dec. 2001: The WWF-WCW Dream Matches We Really Want! Also: Tazz, Dudleys, Perry Saturn, Johnny Valentine, 100 WCW facts.

Feb. 2002: RVD: The Story You've Been Missing For 10 Years! Also: Hardys, Randy Orton, Shawn Stasiak, Turnbuckle Turkey Awards.

April 2002: Feud Alert! The Lowdown On 2002's Hotest Showdowns! Also: Rikishi, Stacy Keibler, Shane Helms. 2001 report cards.

June 2002: Special Comeback Issue: Triple-H, Chris Benoit, Kevin Nash. Also: Chris Jericho, Howard Stern, hypothetical unification showdowns.

Aug. 2002: WrestleMania X8: The *Real* Winners And Losers. Also: Hulk Hogan, Scott Steiner, Jamie Noble, Jarrett-Christopher, All-Japan.

Oct. 2002: Dark Side Be Damned! Undertaker's At His Best As Himself! Also: Ric Flair, Triple-H, Wahoo McDaniel, Goldberg, WWE-Hollywood.

Dec. 2002: The Impossible Dream, Part 2: Can Angle Win Another Olympic Gold? Also: Shane McMahon, PTC-WWE, Trish Stratus, Malice, next best things.

Feb. 2003: HBK's Miracle Comeback: Will The Fans Let Him Make The Smart Choice? Also: Edge, RVD, Chuck & Billy, Russ Haas Memorial, Turnbuckle Turkeys.

April 2003: Big Poppa Pump: On A Dirty Mission To Clean Up WWE. Also: Ron Killings, Big Show, WWE agents, report cards.

June 2003: Grabbing For Greatness: Triple-H's Desperate Quest For Immortality. Also: Abdullah, Shawn Michaels, Chris Benoit, WCW winners & losers.

Aug. 2003: WrestleMania XIX: The Supercard That Changed The Course Of History! Also: Rene Dupree, The Hurricane, Chris Jericho, Team Angle, injuries.

Oct. 2003: Done? Don't Count On It! Stone-Cold Will Die If He Can't Fight! Also: Kliq, Miss Elizabeth, D-Lo Brown, FBI, WWE nostalgia.

Dec. 2003: The 10 Most Respectable Wrestlers Who Get No Respect. Also: Dragon vs. Misterio, Hulk Hogan, Lance Storm, Sting, Lawler vs. Rhodes.

Feb. 2004: The Game vs. Da Man: The Death War That's Too Brutal To Last! Also: Undertaker, Kane-Shane, Shaniqua, Briscoes vs. Briscos, Turnbuckle Turkeys.

April 2004: The Raw vs. Smackdown Super Bowl Party: WWE Will Never Be The Same! Also: Tajiri, Maven, Carly Colon, Raw report cards.

June 2004: Who Can Tame The Beast That Is Batista? Also: Hardcore Holly, Michael Shane, Chavo-Eddie, "McSpansion's" 20th anniversary.

Aug. 2004: WrestleMania Alumni Agree: Randy Orton's Life Is Changed Forever! Also: Eddie Guerrero, Hall & Nash, Chris Benoit, insiders' poll.

Nov. 2004: John Cena: Do We Need To Hate Him To Love Him? Also: Shelton Benjamin, Steamboat-Punk, Chavo Classic, A.J. Styles, Jonathan Coachman, William Regal, OVW streetfight.

Feb. 2005: Why Randy Orton Will Succeed Where Brock Lesnar Failed. Also: JBL, Batista, Dudleys, Striker, Jeff Hardy, Turnbuckle Turkeys.

May 2005: The Return Of Brock Lesnar: Is BL The Only Man To Take Out JBL? Also: Maven, Hardcore Holly, Lita, TNA, Raw report cards.

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Spotlight Card of the Month

NEWARK, DE—East Coast Wrestling Association at the Greater Newark Boys' & Girls' Club: **Aden Chambers** pinned **Billy Bax** ... **Vic D. Vine** pinned **Andrew Ryker** ... **Mega** pinned **Mr. Ooh La La** ... **Billy Bax** won a 10-man battle royal to earn a spot in a three-way match for the heavyweight title later in the evening ... **Shawn Patrick** pinned **Rob Eckos** ... "**Maniac**" **Mark Milonas** pinned **The Japanese Pool Boy** ... **Fred Sampson**, **Johnny Maxx**, & **Chase Del Monte** defeated **The Chick Magnets** ... **Rob Eckos** won a 10-man battle royal to earn a spot in the three-way match for the heavyweight title later in the evening ... Heavyweight champion **Scotty Charisma** defeated **Billy Bax** and **Rob Eckos** in a three-way match when he pinned Bax ... **Cheetah Master** & **Ace Darling** defeated **Mike Kruel** & **Freak Nastty** when Darling pinned Kruel.
(07-16-05)

—"Spotlight" photos by Joe Zanolle

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA

HOLLYWOOD—Pro Wrestling Guerilla at the Los Feliz JCC: **Quicksilver** defeated **Ronin** ... **T.J. Perkins** defeated **Davey Richards** ... **Petey Williams** & **Chris Sabin** defeated **Scott Lost** & **Joey Ryan** ... **C.M. Punk** defeated **Ricky Reyes** ... **Kevin Steen** defeated **Super Dragon** ... **El Generico** & **Human Tornado** defeated **Phoenix Star** & **Zokre**, **Hook Bomberry** & **Top Gun Talwar**, and **Disco Machine** & **Excalibur** in a four-way match ... Heavyweight champion **A.J. Styles** defeated **Christopher Daniels** and **James Gibson** in a three-way match.
(07-10-05)

—Jennie Carrera

SAN JOSE—WWE at the H.P. Pavilion: Smackdown tag team champions **Joey Mercury** & **Johnny Nitro** defeated **Booker T** & **Hardcore Holly** and **The Basham Brothers** in a three-way elimination match ... **Charlie Haas** pinned **Matt Morgan** ... **Paul London** won a cruiserweight battle royal, last eliminating **Juventud Guerrera** ... **Torrie Wilson** defeated **Jackie Gayda**, **Joy Giovanni**, and **Michelle McCool** in a bikini contest ... **Chris Benoit** & **The Big Show** defeated **Muhammad Hassan** & **Khosrow Daivari** ... **Rene Dupree** beat **Mark Jindrak** ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** defeated **Eddie Guerrero** in a best-of-three-falls match ... **The Undertaker** defeated **John Bradshaw Layfield** & U.S. champion **Orlando Jordan** in a non-title handicap match.
(06-26-05)

—Kelly Powell

CONNECTICUT

WOODBRIDGE—Ring of Honor at the CPT Sports Center: **Nigel McGuinness** defeated **Claudio Castagnoli** ... **Austin Aries** defeated **El Generico** ... **Homicide** defeated **Dizzy**, **Azriel**, and **Kevin Steen** in a four corners of survival match ... Tag team champions **The Carnage Crew** defeated **Dunn** & **Marcos**, **Cheech** & **Deranged**, and **Fast Eddie** & **Mike Kruel** in an ultimate endurance elimination match ... **A.J. Styles** beat **Roderick Strong** ... Pure champion **Samoa Joe** defeated **Jimmy Rave** ... **Matt Hardy** defeated **Christopher Daniels** ... ROH champion **C.M. Punk** defeated **James Gibson**.
(07-16-05)

—Jeff Ormond

FLORIDA

ORLANDO—TNA No Surrender pay-per-view at Universal Studios: **Shocker** beat **Jerrelle Clark** ... **Chris Harris** & **James Storm** defeated **Michael Shane** & **Alex Shelley** ... **Sonny Siaki** & **Apolo** beat **Simon Diamond** & **David Young** ... **Samoa Joe** defeated **Chris Sabin** ... **A-1**, **Bobby Rude**, & **Eric Young** defeated **Andy Douglas**, **Chase Stevens**, & **Lance Hoyt** ... **Monty Brown** & **Kip James** (**The Outlaw**) defeated **Ron Killings** & **Konnan** in a streetfight ... **A.J. Styles** pinned **Sean Waltman** (**Jerry Lynn** was the guest referee) ... TNA X champion **Christopher Daniels** pinned **Petey Williams** ... NWA heavyweight champion **Raven** defeated **Abyss** in a dog-collar match.
(07-17-05)

—Jason Langin

INDIANA

MADISON—AWA Supreme Championship Wrestling at the SCW Building: **Live Wire** pinned **T-Dogg** ... **Chris Morrus** pinned **Luscious Loco** ... **Kliff Hanger** & **Dez** defeated **The Fat** & **The Furious** ... Tag team champs **The Fallen** beat **The Blackhearts** by disqualification ... **Eric Draven** beat **Spazz** in a first-blood match ... U.S. champion **Nic Noble** beat **Apollo.**
(07-23-05)

—Shawn Sands

HAMMOND—IWA Mid-South at the National Guard Armory: **Trik Davis** beat **Jayson Strife** ... Ladies champ **Mickie Knuckles** beat **Shelirious** ... **Brandon Thomaselli** beat **Steve Stone** ... **Brandon Thomaselli** & **Matt Sydal** beat **Lotus** & **Crazy J** ... **Chad Collyer** beat **Delirious** ... **Chandler McClure** beat **Tracey Smothers** ... **Ryan Boz** beat **Eric Priest** ... **Tyler Black** beat **Lotus** ... **Ian** & **Axl Rotten** beat **Vito** & **Sal Thomaselli** to win the tag team title ... Light heavyweight champ **Josh Abercrombie** beat **Matt**

Even though he connected with a picture-perfect dropkick here, Billy Bax was unable to beat Aden Chambers. That was due in large part to the ill-timed interference of his own partner, Rob Eckos.

Sydal three falls to two in a 30-minute "Ironman" match that went into overtime.
(07-09-05)

—Jim Fannin

IOWA

NEWTON—World League Wrestling at the Newton High School: **Psycho Sarge** beat **Darin Waid** ... **Josie** beat **Wonderful Wendy** ... **Mr. Destiny** beat **T.S. Agressor** ... **Wade Chism** & **Dakota** defeated **Jason Bates** & **Superstar Steve** ... **Rick Steiner** pinned **Ty Dalton**.
(07-15-05)

—Rick Jennings

KENTUCKY

RICHMOND—Bad 2 The Bone Wrestling at the Madison County Fair: **Brent Goodin** pinned **Maxx Mizery** ... **Simon Sezz** beat **Andre Justice** by disqualification ... **Eddie Browning** defeated **Billy Black** ... **Billy Maverick** pinned **Colt Steele** ... Heavyweight champion **Vic the Bruiser** beat **Steve Marino.**
(07-23-05)

—Frank Miller

LOUISVILLE—WWE at Freedom Hall: **Viscera** defeated **Tyson Tomko** ... OVW Southern tag team champions **Chad** & **Tank Toland** defeated **Matt Cappotelli** & **Johnny Jeter** ... Intercontinental champion **Carlito Caribbean Cool** pinned **Shelton Benjamin** ... **Christy Hemme** defeated **Victoria** ... Raw tag team champions **The Hurricane** & **Rosey** defeated **The Heartthrobs** ... **Kerwin White** beat **Tajiri** ... **The Big Show** & **Kane** defeated **Edge** & **Gene Snitsky** ... **Shawn Michaels** pinned **Ric Flair** ... WWE champion **John Cena** beat **Triple-H.**
(07-16-05)

—Marcus Dowland

LEXINGTON—WWE at Rupp Arena: **Viscera** pinned **Tyson Tomko** ... **Kerwin White** beat **Tajiri** ... **Christy Hemme** defeated **Victoria** ... Raw tag team champions **The Hurricane** & **Rosey** defeated **The Heartthrobs** ... **The Big Show** defeated **Edge** by disqualification ... Intercontinental champion **Carlito Caribbean Cool** beat **Shelton Benjamin** ... **Shawn Michaels** defeated **Ric Flair** ... WWE champion **John Cena** pinned **Triple-H.**
(07-15-05)

—Anthony Minelli

MONTICELLO—Bad 2 The Bone Wrestling at the Wayne County Fair: **Billy Maverick** defeated **Maxx Mizery** ... **Brent Goodin** pinned **Todd Morton** ... **Simon Sezz** defeated light heavyweight champion **J.C. Bailey** by disqualification ... **Vic the Bruiser** beat heavyweight champion **Tracey Smothers** by disqualification.
(07-07-05)

—Joe Bailey

LEBANON—Bad 2 The Bone Wrestling at the Marion County Fair: **Dynamite Derrick** pinned **Maxx Mizery** ... U.S. champion **Brandon Blaze** pinned **Billy Maverick** ... **Vic the Bruiser** pinned **Todd Morton** ... **J.C. Bailey** defeated light heavyweight champion **Simon Sezz** to win the title.
(07-05-05)

—Joe Bailey

MAINE

PORTLAND—WWE at the Cumberland County Civic Center: **Booker T** defeated **Christian** ... **Sylvan Grenier** beat **Scotty Too Hotty** ... **Nunzio** & **Vito** defeated **The Shane Twins** ... Smackdown tag team champions **Joey Mercury** & **Johnny Nitro** beat **Heidenreich** & **William Regal** ... Cruiserweight champion **Paul London** defeated **Juventud Guerrera** and **Super Crazy** by countout in a three-way match ... U.S. champion **Orlando Jordan** pinned **Chris Benoit** ... **The Undertaker** pinned **Muhammad Hassan**.
(07-11-05)

—Tremaine Phillips

Andrew Ryker thought he'd surprise Vic D. Vine with a sunset flip from the ring apron. He didn't count on Vine surprising him by sitting down on *him* and grabbing the ropes for leverage during the pin.

MARYLAND

OCEAN CITY—WWE at the Powell Convention Center: **Booker T** pinned **Christian** ... **Psicosis** & **Super Crazy** defeated **Nunzio** & **Big Vito** ... **The Boogeyman** defeated **Doug Basham** ... Cruiserweight champion **Paul London** pinned **Juventud Guerrera** ... **Muhammad Hassan** defeated **Scotty Too Hotty** ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** pinned **Eddie Guerrero** ... U.S. champion **Orlando Jordan** pinned **William Regal** ... Smackdown tag team champions **Joey Mercury** & **Johnny Nitro** beat **Hardcore Holly** & **Heidenreich** ... World champion **Batista** pinned **John Bradshaw Layfield**.
(07-17-05)

—Kerry Taylor

NEVADA

LAS VEGAS—WWE Vengeance pay-per-view at the Thomas & Mack Center: Intercontinental champion **Carlito Caribbean Cool** pinned **Shelton Benjamin** ... **Victoria** pinned **Christy Hemme** ... **Kane** pinned **Edge** ... **Shawn Michaels** pinned **Kurt Angle** ... WWE champion **John Cena** defeated **Chris Jericho** and **Christian** in a three-way match when he pinned Christian ... World champion **Batista** pinned **Triple-H** in a "Hell In A Cell" match.
(06-26-05)

—Will Welsh

NEW JERSEY

MANASQUAN—National Wrestling Superstars at the Manasquan Elks Lodge: **Los Diablos Locos** beat **Corrupted Youth** & **Mr. Motion** ... **Mahoney** beat **Eddie Collins** ... **Slayer** beat **The Equalizer** ... **Brawley** pinned **Corvis Fear** ... **Tito** & **Jay Santana** beat **Johnny Candido** & **Simon Diamond.**
(07-23-05)

—Shaun Redding

WILDWOOD—WWE at the Convention Center: **Viscera** defeated **Tyson Tomko** ... **Kerwin White** pinned **Tajiri** ... **Christy Hemme** pinned **Victoria** ... Raw tag team champions **The Hurricane** & **Rosey** beat **The Heartthrobs** ... Intercontinental champion **Carlito Caribbean Cool** pinned **Shelton Benjamin** ... **The Big Show** & **Kane** defeated **Edge** & **Gene Snitsky** ... **Shawn Michaels** pinned **Ric Flair** ... WWE champion **John Cena** pinned **Triple-H.**
(07-17-05)

—Elliott Laurence

NEW YORK

BUFFALO—WWE Great American Bash pay-per-view at the HSBC Arena: **Heidenreich** & **Road Warrior Animal** defeated Smackdown tag team champions **Joey Mercury** & **Johnny Nitro** to win the belts ... **Booker T** pinned **Christian** ... U.S. champion **Orlando Jordan** pinned **Chris Benoit** ... **The Undertaker** pinned **Muhammad Hassan** ... **The Mexicools** beat **The Blue World Order** ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** pinned **Eddie Guerrero** ... **Melina** defeated **Torrie Wilson** in a bra and panties matches (**Candice Michelle** was the guest referee) ... **John Bradshaw Layfield** beat World champion **Batista** by disqualification when Batista was caught using a chair.
(07-24-05)

—Dan Murphy

WATERTOWN—WWE at the Fairgrounds Arena: **Viscera** pinned **Rene Dupree** ... Intercontinental champion **Carlito Caribbean Cool** defeated **Rob Conway** and **Shelton Benjamin** in a three-way elimination match ... **Christy Hemme** pinned **Victoria** ... **Kurt Angle** defeated **Eugene** ... **Kane** beat **Edge** ... Raw tag team champions **The Hurricane** & **Rosey** defeated **The Heartthrobs** ... **The Big Show** defeated **Chris Masters** ... WWE champion **John Cena** pinned **Chris Jericho.**
(07-24-05)

—Johnny Stephenson

HUDSON FALLS—World of Hurt Wrestling at the Knights of Columbus: **Shockwave** & **Timmy**

Why is everybody picking on poor Mega? Maybe it had something to do with the fact that he weighs 400 pounds and everyone wanted him out of the battle royal pronto.

Tasteless defeated **Sean Alexander** & **Timmy Wright** ... Cruiserweight champion **Steve Kruz** defeated **Bobby Flamingo** ... **Texas Outlaw** defeated **J.P. Black** ... **Good Lord Willing** defeated **Scott Scarsdale** to become the WOHW general manager, effective August 1 ... TV champ **Jeff Starr** defeated **Chuck Deep** ... Women's champ **Kayla Sparks** won a three-way match against **Miss DeVille** and **Barbie** ... **Punk** defeated **Jim Tanner** for the hardcore title in a loser-leaves-WOHW match ... **Shane Alden** & **Virus** defeated tag champs **Swinger Sidusky** & **Reed James** to win the title ... **Nick Neighborhood** defeated heavyweight champ **Danger** to win the title.
(07-22-05)

—Mark Leavy

NORTH CAROLINA

SALEMBURG—ACPW at the Lakewood High School: **Sean Cruise** beat light heavyweight champion **Gary Tater** to win the title ... Tag team champions **Chuck King** & **James Reno** beat **Carney** & **Steve Michaels** ... **Brandon Marretti** beat **Tito Rain** ... **Sik Wit It** beat **Hangtime** & **Draven** in a three-way dance ... **The Stro** beat **Naudia** in an intergender taped-fist match ... **Chaos** wrestled **Mutilator** to a no-contest ... **K.C. McKnight** wrestled **Corey Edsel** to a 15-minute time-limit draw ... **Zane Dawson** won the heavyweight title in a four-way ladder match against **Tre G**, **Dr. Love**, and **Charlie Dreamer**.
(07-23-05)

—Marianne Miller

MOORESVILLE—Exodus Wrestling Alliance at the National Guard Armory: **Tony Kozina** beat **New Breed** ... **Heavy B**, **Bobby Ramon**, & **Scorpion** defeated **Ian Daniels**, **Mando Guerrero Jr.**, & **Rampage** ... **Shane Austin** defeated **Tim Hunter** ... **Greg Armstrong** defeated **Ethan Cage** ... **George South Sr.** defeated **Jason King** ... Heavyweight champion **Jason Jones** defeated **Jimmy Jack Funk Jr.**
(07-22-05)

—Michael Carpenter

BURLINGTON—CWF/AWA Mid-Atlantic at the Carolina Sports Arena: **Gregory Vercetti** & **Jay Sinn** defeated **Chris Collins** & **Matty Dee** ... **Xsiris** beat **Ultra Dragon** and **Kid Justice** in a triangle match ... **Tank Lawson** defeated **Rob McBride** in a $500 arm-wrestling challenge ... Tag team champions **J-Money** & **Will B. Smooth** defeated **Mikael Yamaha** & **Corey Edsel** ... TV champ **Jesse Ortega** defeated **Mitch Conner** ... **Garry Stevens** pinned **Ric Converse** to win the Mid-Atlantic heavyweight title.
(07-15-05)

—Grant Sawyer

OKLAHOMA

MUSKOGEE—NWA Universal at the Muskogee Civic Center: **Tim Warcloud** defeated **Skrappy K-9** ... **American Anarchy** & **Brandon Groom** defeated **Slam Shady** & **Michael Barry** ... TV champion **Spoiler 2000** defeated **Ryan Kelly** ... X division champion **Gary Gram** defeated **Big Daddy Dominator** ... **Scotty Charisma** & NWA Oklahoma champion **John O'Malley** defeated **The New Texas Outlaws**.
(07-23-05)

—Cara Church

PENNSYLVANIA

PITTSTON—CHIKARA at The Staircase: **Lance Steel** defeated **Prophet** ... **Allison Danger**, **Mickie Knuckles**, & **Alere Littlefeather** beat **Dr. Cheung**, **Darkness Crabtree**, & **Crossbones** ... **Vries Kastelein** beat **Larry Sweeney** ... **Blind Rage** & **Hallowicked** won a four-corners match, beating **Ryan Cruz** & **Darin Corbin**, **Retail Dragon** & **Discount Tiger**, and **Davey Andrews** & **Shane Hagadorn** ... **Mike Quackenbush**, **Equinox**, **Sabian**, & **Eddie Kingston** defeated **Chris Hero**, **Arik Cannon**, **Claudio Castagnoli**, & **Gran Akuma** ... **Anthony Franco** & **Matt Turner** beat **Cheech** & **Cloudy** in a no-holds-barred match ... ***Young Lions Cup III Tournament, finals:*** **Shane Storm** pinned **Icarus** to win the tournament.
(07-24-05)

—Ryan Harris

HELLERTOWN—CHIKARA at the American Legion: ***Young Lions Cup III Tournament, quarterfinal matches:*** **Shane Storm** pinned **Vries Kastelein** ... **Equinox** beat **Lance Steel** ... **Niles Young** beat **Josh Abercrombie** ... **KUDO** defeated **Anthony Franco** ... **Crossbones** pinned **Shiima Xion** ... **Claudio Castagnoli** beat **C.J. O'Doyle** ... ***Non-tournament matches:*** **Chris Hero**, **Arik Cannon**, **Icarus**, & **Gran Akuma** defeated **Trik Davis**, **Mickie Knuckles**, **Ryan Cruz**, & **Darin Corbin** ... **UltraMantis Black**, **Hallowicked**, & **Blind Rage** beat **Mike Quackenbush**, **Lance Steel**, & **Jigsaw** ... ***Young Lions Cup III Tournament, semifinal match:*** Storm defeated Castagnoli, KUDO, Crossbones, Young, and Equinox in a six-way match.
(07-23-05)

—Ryan Harris

McKEESPORT—NWA Pro Wrestling Express at the Sportatorium: **Jason Cage** & **Dan Miles** wrestled **Dash Bennett** & **Sean Dahmer** to a no-contest ... **The Tri Chi Fraternity** defeated **Sabotage** & **Teddy Fine** ... **Justin Idol** defeated **Devil Bhudakahn** ... **Heretic** beat **Nikita Allanov** by reverse decision ... **Quinn Magnum** defeated brass knuckles champion **Scott Venom** by disqualification ... Three Rivers champion **Chris Taylor** defeated **Eric Extasy** ... **Devin Devine** & tag team champions **Da Munchies** defeated NWA-PWX champion **Scottie Gash**, **Brandon K**, & **Bigg**.
(07-23-05)

—Alan Novak

READING—CHIKARA at the Riverside Association Building: ***Young Lions Cup III Tournament, quarterfinal matches:*** **Rorschach** beat **Trik Davis** ... **Sabian** defeated **Dr. Cheung** ... **Icarus** beat **Prophet** ... **Ricky Reyes** defeated **Cheech** ... **Mickie Knuckles** pinned **Retail Dragon** ... **Arik Cannon** beat **Mat Bomboy** ... ***Non-tournament matches:*** **Larry Sweeney** beat **Josh Abercrombie** ... **Chris Hero**, **Claudio Castagnoli**, & **Gran Akuma** defeated **Mike Quackenbush**, **Lance Steel**, & **Jigsaw** ... ***Young Lions Cup III Tournament, semifinal match:*** Icarus defeated Rorschach, Sabian, Knuckles, Cannon, and Reyes in a six-way match.
(07-22-05)

—Ryan Harris

READING—International Championship Wrestling's "Legends Of Wrestling" card at First Energy Stadium: **Chris Cline** & **Nicholas Tide** beat **Mike Rattick** & **Doken** ... **Lovely Lacey** pinned **Cindy Rogers** ... **Doink the Clown** defeated **Disco Inferno** ... **Hacksaw Duggan** pinned **King Kong Bundy** ... The match between **Billy Gunn** and **Norman Smiley** resulted in a no-contest when **Raven** and **Al Snow** interfered ... **Norman Smiley** & **Al Snow** beat **Billy Gunn** & **Raven** in a "Raven's rules" match ... **Billy Gunn** won a $15,000 battle royal, last eliminating **Al Snow**.
(07-15-05)

—Timothy A. Walker

MECHANICSBURG—Pro Wrestling Entertainment at the Silver Spring Fire Hall: **Coach Boden** beat **Jey Graham** ... **Sabian** pinned **"Jackpot" Jimmy Jessup** ... **"Hangman" Harley Watkins** beat **"Luscious" Johnny Graham** ... **John Cabbie** beat **Mana the Polynesian Warrior** ... **Gran Akuma** & **Icarus** defeated tag team champions **Mike Quackenbush** & **Hallowicked** in a best-of-three-falls match to win the title ... **Larry Sweeney** pinned heavyweight champion **Glen Osbourne** to win the championship.
(07-16-05)

—Timothy A. Walker

SOUTH CAROLINA

SPARTANBURG—American Pro Wrestling at the American Coliseum: **Jimmy Kindrid** defeated **Disoriented** ... **Mark Slain** & **Ken Magnum** beat **Boomer Payne** & **David Duke** ... **Nick Fury** pinned **Brandon Phoenix** ... Tag team champs **Bill White** & **Doug Hawkins** beat **Billy Rucker** & **Mickey Richards** ... U.S. champion **Ostgard** wrestled **Chief Jay Eagle** to a no-contest ... **Steve Cronic** beat **Kid Kaos** ... **Sir Jonathan Buffett**, **Rowdy James**, &**Brandon East** defeated Carolinas champion **Zack Salvation**, **Nick Fury**, & **Bryan Austin** ... **Scotty Black** wrestled **Viper** to a double-countout ... **Sala** & **Tama Makota** defeated **Lightning** & **Scottie Brooks** ... **Shane Austin** & **Mickey Richards** wrestled **Boomer Payne** & **David Duke** to a double-disqualification.
(07-23-05)

—Glen Adams

IVA—IWA Flashfire at the Recreation Center: **Purple Passion** pinned **Draco** ... **Dale Dwindle** pinned **Big Country** ... **Hallowicked** pinned **Johnny Blaze** ... Internet champ **Buford T** pinned **Tow Truck** ... U.S. champ **Casey J** pinned **Lance Christopher** ... Heavyweight champ **Don Matthews** & tag team champs **Rahn Jordan** & **James Boulevard** defeated **Phillip Pain** & **The Stateline.**
(07-16-05)

—Brad Bates

TENNESSEE

KINGSPORT—Iron Ring Wrestling at the Civic Auditorium: **Alan King** & **Jamie Gibson** beat **Jeff** & **Brant Storm** ... **Rick Morton** & **Brad Thomas** beat **K.C. Thunder** & **Tom Prichard** ... **C.C. Rockett** beat **The Superstar** to win the international title ... **El Dorado Raines** beat **The Great Ninja** ... **Kid Kash** won a triple threat match over **Alex Winters** and **Easy Money** ... **Tony Atlas** wrestled **The Barbarian** to a double-countout ... Heavyweight champ **Jeff Tankersly** beat **David Flair** ... Tag team champs **Eddie** & **Jimmy Golden** beat **The Midnight Express** by disqualification.
(07-17-05)

—Frank Miller

TEXAS

GLADEWATER—New Age Wrestling Alliance at the Wallace Arena: **Pendragon** & **Logan** defeated **Sheik Fucall** & **Texas Red** ... **Joey Corman** and **Steve Demarco** wrestled to a double-countout ... **Seth Shai** defeated **"Jiggalo" James Johnson** ... **Sidd Murder** beat **J.T. Lamotta** ... **Gemini** defeated NAWA heavyweight champion **Robert Evans** to win the title ... **Andrew Dalton** beat **Khan**.
(07-24-05)

—Kokina Lynn

ARLINGTON—Professional Championship Wrestling at the PCW Arena: **James Johnson** beat **Texas Red** ... **Robert Evans** beat **The Code** ... **Mike Foxx** beat **Adrian Ambrose** ... **Canyon** & **Jack Dalton** beat **Apocalypse** & **Damien** to win the tag team title ... **Mace Malone** beat **Shadow** by disqualification.
(07-23-05)

—Rob Moore

MARSHALL—American Championship Wrestling at the Dogg Pound: **Maverick** beat hardcore champion **Bruiser** to win the title ... **Seth Shai** defeated **Angel of Sinn** ... **Andrew Dalton** beat **Jason Skyy** ... **The Future** defeated **Apocalypse** ... **Fantana** beat **Mongoose** ... **Gemini** & **Kahn** defeated tag team champions **The Overboys** by disqualification.
(07-23-05)

—Darryl Morris

WEST VIRGINIA

BROOKS HILL—Mason-Dixon Wrestling at the Community Fair: **T.J. Phillips** defeated **Jason Kincaid** ... **Cole Cash** & **Chris Kahn** defeated **Zac Vincent** & **Vance Desmond** ... **Thrillbilly Ox** & **Briar** defeated **Southern Brawler** & **J.R. Slam** ... **Dan Richards** defeated **Beau James** ... **Zubov** defeated **Zander** ... **The Stro** defeated **The Barbarian.**
(07-22-05)

—Fay Ferguson

INTERNATIONAL

CANADA

OLDCASTLE, ONTARIO—Border City Wrestling at the Ciociaro Club: **Johnny Devine** won a six-man scramble match against **Ryan Wood**, **Kid Kopeland**, **El Reverso**, **Derek Wylde**, and **Kris Chambers** ... **Brad Bradley** & **Conrad Kennedy III** defeated **J.T. Playa** & **Jon Bolen** ... **Mat Duval** pinned **Ruffy Silverstein** ... **Gutter** & **Cody Steele** beat **Geza Kalman Jr.** & **Johnny Bravo** ... **Bobby Rude** pinned **A-1** to become the new heavyweight champion ... **Phil Atlas** & **Jimmy Jacobs** defeated **N8 Mattson** & **Danny Daniels** to become the new tag team champions ... **Jaime D** pinned **Shantelle** ... TV champ **Petey Williams** pinned **Alex Shelley**.
(07-22-05)

—Holly Lengyel

QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC—Elite Wrestling Revolution at the Horizon Centre: **Damian Steele** beat **Franky the Mobster** ... **Pee-Wee** beat **D-Generate** ... **2.0** beat **Perfect Genetics** ... A three-way match between **Senior Kidd**, **Davey Jackson** and **Shogan** ended in a no-contest ... **Jack-a-Lidster** beat **Kevin Steen**, **Dave Silva**, and **Fred la Merveille** in a four-way match ... **Vanessa Kraven** beat **Lufisto** ... Tag team champions **Reality Check** defeated **Hell Storm** & **El Generico** ... Heavyweight champion **Exess** defeated **Austin Aries.**
(07-22-05)

—Patrick Mercier

OSHAWA, ONTARIO—Warrior 1 Wrestling at the Civic Centre: **Sexy Monkey**, **Kevin Grace**, & **J-Man** defeated **Brandon Thurston**, **Cade Cassidy**, & **Randy Walker** ... **Pierre Montrose** defeated **Kris Chambers** ... **Sean Spears** beat **Mastiff** ... **A-1** defeated **Don Paysan** ... **Puma** & **Chad Collyer** beat **El Tornado** & **Tyson Dux** ... **Kobra Kai**, **Otis Idol**, & **El Vigote** beat **Jimmy Jacobs**, **Ash**, & **Sombra** ... **Cody Steele** pinned **Derek Wylde** ... **Gail Kim** & **J.P. Tarantula** beat **Shantelle** & **El Fuego** ... **The Highlanders** beat **Crazy Steve** & **Kamala** ... **Chris Sabin** pinned **Cody 45** ... **Sinn** & **Elvis Ozbourne** defeated **Bobby Rude** & **Petey Williams** ... **James Rogers** won an eight-man gauntlet match that included **Nigel McGuinness**, **Stevie Lee**, **James Champagne**, **J.T. Playa**, **Kingman**, **Christopher Levesque**, and **Hangman** ... **American Dragon** won a three-way dance with **Kid Kash** and **Extremo** by disqualification ... **Raven** pinned **Samoa Joe** (**Mick Foley** was the guest referee).
(06-26-05)

—Dan Murphy

JAPAN

SAITAMA—WWE at the Saitama Super Arena: **The Big Show** & **Akebono** defeated **Carlito Caribbean Cool** & **Matt Morgan** ... Cruiserweight champion **Paul London** defeated **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** and **Funaki** in a three-way match ... **Chris Benoit** defeated **Shelton Benjamin** ... **Tajiri** pinned **Muhammad Hassan** ... **The Undertaker**, **Kane**, & **Rey Misterio Jr.** defeated **Eddie Guerrero**, **Kurt Angle**, & **Edge** ... WWE champion **John Cena** defeated **John Bradshaw Layfield** & **Orlando Jordan** in a handicap match ... **Shawn Michaels** pinned **Chris Jericho** ... World champion **Batista** defeated **Triple-H** in a streetfight.
(07-02-05)

—Koichi Yoshizawa

SAITAMA—WWE at the Saitama Super Arena: **Edge** pinned **Kane** ... Cruiserweight champion **Paul London** pinned **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** ... **Chris Jericho** beat **Shelton Benjamin** ... **The Big Show** pinned Intercontinental champion **Carlito Caribbean Cool** in a non-title match ... **Chris Benoit** & **Shawn Michaels** defeated **Muhammad Hassan** & **Khosrow Daivari** ... **Tajiri** pinned U.S. champion **Orlando Jordan** in a non-title match ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** pinned **Eddie Guerrero** ... **The Undertaker** pinned **Kurt Angle** ... **Batista** & **John Cena** beat **Triple-H** & **John Bradshaw Layfield**.
(07-01-05)

—Koichi Yoshizawa

SOUTH KOREA

SEOUL—WWE at Jamsil Indoor Stadium: **Edge** pinned **Kane** ... Cruiserweight champion **Paul London** defeated **Funaki** and **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** in a three-way match ... **Chris Jericho** defeated **Shelton Benjamin** ... **The Big Show** beat Intercontinental champion **Carlito Caribbean Cool** in a non-title match ... **Chris Benoit** & **Shawn Michaels** defeated **Muhammad Hassan** & **Khosrow Daivari** ... **Tajiri** pinned U.S. champion **Orlando Jordan** in a non-title match ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** pinned **Eddie Guerrero** ... **The Undertaker** pinned **Kurt Angle** ... **Batista** & **John Cena** beat **Triple-H** & **John Bradshaw Layfield**.
(06-30-05)

—George Greer

Former ECWA champ Mike Kruel had control of Cheetah Master at this point during a tag match. It would be Kruel staring up at the lights when the match ended, however.

PWI classic

From the September 1995 issue of *Inside Wrestling*

THE MABEL PARADOX:

Under All That Fat Beats The Heart Of A Nice Guy!

In his failed attempt to become a rulebreaker, Mabel is showing that nothing can cover a person's true character

By Brandi Mankiewicz

MABEL IS THE kind of man you want to have on your side. And what kind is that? A 6'10", 503-pound man who makes use of every pound of power in his body and is nearly unstoppable when he goes on a rampage. In the great tradition of wrestling's big men, such as Haystacks Calhoun and Yokozuna, Mabel's incredible girth alone makes him dangerous when he's a man on a mission.

There used to be a routine that Oscar, Mabel's manager when he was a fan favorite in the WWF, and Mo would play out for reporters.

OSCAR: "He's 6'10"."

MO: "That's right."

OSCAR: "He's 503 pounds."

MO: "That's right."

OSCAR: "I'm glad he's a nice guy."

MO: "I'm glad he's on our side."

There's the Mabel paradox. He's strong, almost obscenely big, but when it comes right down to it, Mabel would never intentionally hurt somebody outside the wrestling ring, and inside the ring, he does everything possible to merely beat his opponents, not cripple them. He wants everyone to think he's a mean man, but very few actually believe him.

Under all that fat lie no hard feelings, but the heart of a nice guy. A good man.

That's why it looked totally out of character when Mabel and Mo attacked Oscar after matches against The Smokin' Gunns in late-February, and why nobody could believe his eyes when Mabel walked out on his teammates during an eight-man piledriver elimination match in the USWA.

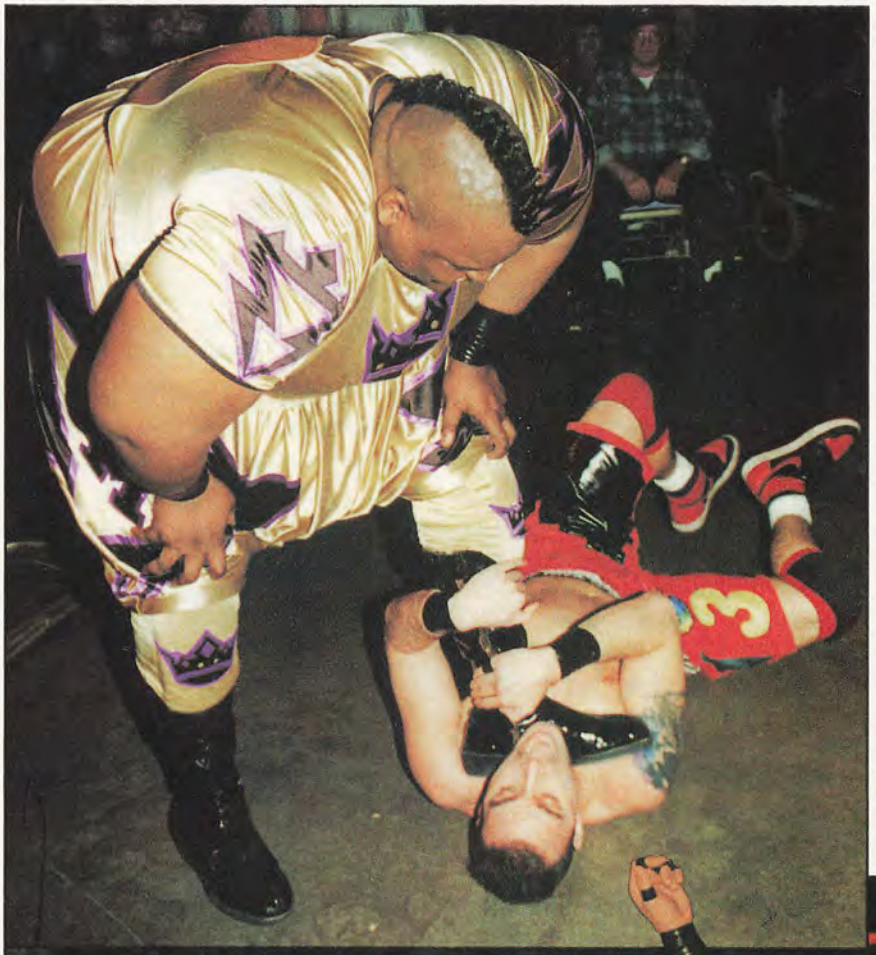
"I was certain we could depend on him," said Bill Dundee, one of Mabel's teammates. "We asked him about what happened in the WWF, but he assured us that everything was okay, and that we could count on him. Then not only does he get up and walk out on us, he goes after us later on."

Mabel's latest attempt at being a bad man came when he teamed with Dundee, Wolfie D, and Jerry Lawler in that eight-man piledriver match against Doug Gilbert, Gorgeous George III, Tommy Rich, and Spellbinder. Mabel walked out on his partners during the match, and returned later to attack them.

Nobody's sure why it happened, although there was some conjecture that Mabel was mostly upset with Lawler, the WWF's pro-rulebreaker broadcaster. Lawler has often insulted Mabel on WWF telecasts (although never to Mabel's face).

"I don't know why he'd do that," Lawler said incredulously. "I never did anything to hurt him. Sticks and stones may break his bones, but names may never harm him. He said he wanted to be my partner, but any fool could've seen that he was more interested in hurting me. I don't know what came over him."

The inside scoop is that nothing came over Mabel. It was merely another in a series of attempts to show himself as a big man with a mean streak. But if you closely examined the tape of that eight-man match, you'd realize that Mabel



Even when "viciously" choking the USWA's Wolfie D (left), Mabel didn't seem totally into it. It was as if he didn't want to really hurt his foe. He looked a bit more driven against Doug Gilbert (below). But this "bad" side seemed forced.

Inside Wrestling ratings

September 1995

WWF

World champion: Diesel

1. Jeff Jarrett
2. Razor Ramon
3. Sid Vicious
4. Bret Hart
5. The Undertaker
6. Jean-Pierre Lafitte
7. Hakushi
8. Shawn Michaels
9. Adam Bomb
10. Jerry Lawler

WCW

World champion: Hulk Hogan

1. Arn Anderson
2. Sting
3. Big Van Vader
4. Ric Flair
5. Randy Savage
6. The Great Muta
7. Big Bubba Rogers
8. Alex Wright
9. Kevin Sullivan
10. Hawk

TAG TEAMS

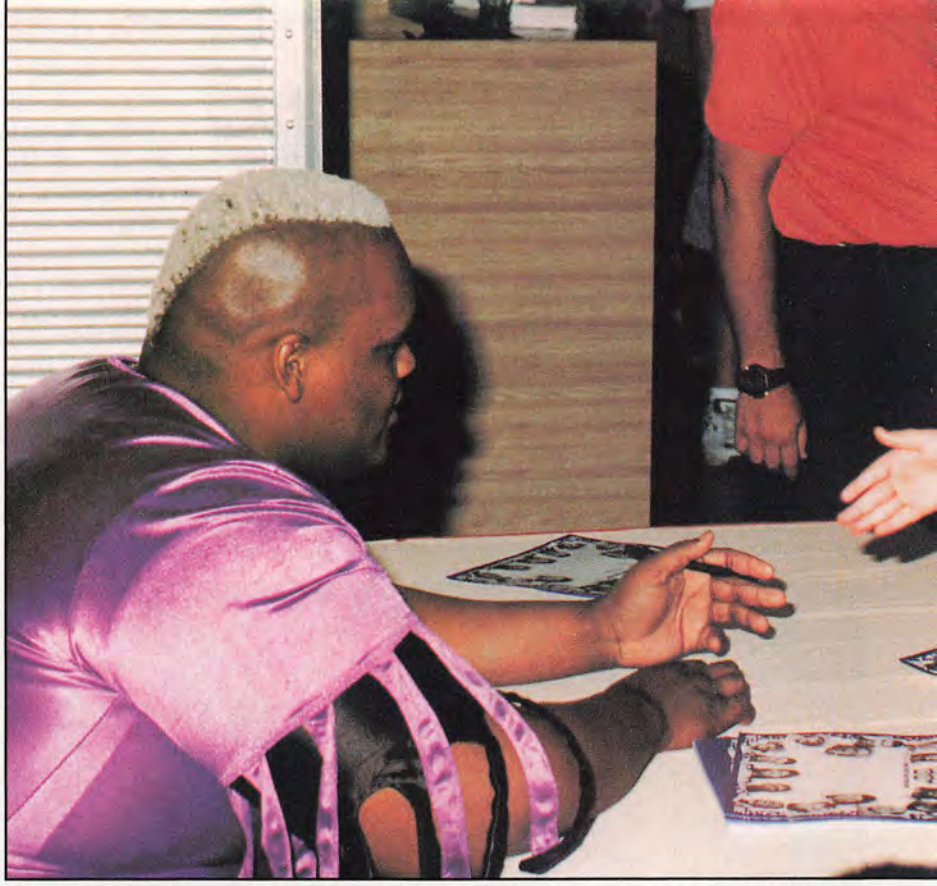
1. The Nasty Boys
2. Owen Hart & Yokozuna
3. Harlem Heat
4. Eli & Jacob Blu
5. The Smokin' Gunns
6. The Rock 'n' Roll Express
7. Al Snow & Unibomb
8. Public Enemy
9. PG-13
10. Lex Luger & Davey Boy Smith

MOST POPULAR

1. Hulk Hogan
2. Diesel
3. Shawn Michaels
4. Sting
5. The Undertaker
6. Bret Hart
7. Razor Ramon
8. Randy Savage
9. Bam Bam Bigelow
10. Lex Luger

MOST HATED

1. Sid Vicious
2. Big Van Vader
3. Jeff Jarrett
4. Ric Flair
5. Bob Backlund
6. Jerry Lawler
7. Hakushi
8. Big Bubba Rogers
9. Kama
10. Tatanka



Although he had turned his back on WWF and USWA fan favorites, the future Viscera didn't need to be coaxed into signing autographs for kids. Talk about a nice guy.

seemed to be holding back.

"He really didn't hurt me like you'd think a 500-pound man could hurt you if he wanted to," Dundee said. "I don't think his heart was in it."

Of course not. Mabel's heart is in enjoying the fans' cheers, dancing to rap music, and beating up on wrestling's bad men. Mabel delighted in proving to fans that size could be everything if used properly, and that wrestling wasn't just a dangerous game; it could be fun if approached with the right attitude.

That attitude wasn't something Mabel made up, it was really him. As Mo once said, "There aren't two Mabels, there's only one Mabel. He's a good man. Wouldn't ever do anything to harm anybody too much."

But frustration took over and drove Mabel to do previously unthinkable acts. Men on a Mission didn't take over the WWF tag team picture as Oscar had promised, and Mo never fully recovered from the leg injury he suffered in mid-1994. Men on a Mission coughed and stalled, and Mabel couldn't figure out how a

Mabel had to have been upset by what Jerry Lawler said about him on WWF TV, so he betrayed him in the USWA. Here, though, he appears reluctant to use excessive force against "The King."

man of his size wasn't dominating.

"He probably thought that he needed a change of attitude," Lawler said. "Maybe he thought he wasn't being mean enough, but you don't just become mean. You either have it inside of you, or you don't."

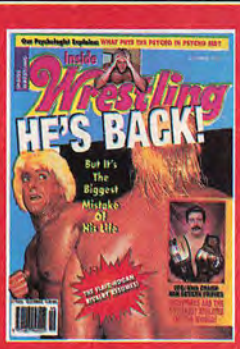
Mabel doesn't, which could make him even more frustrated.

"What's the use of having all that size if you don't have any killer instinct?" Jim Cornette asked. "It's not a waste of talent, because he doesn't have any. It's a waste of resources. I'd rather be like Aldo Montoya and have a little killer instinct. I've seen him in the WWF dressing rooms. He laughs and jokes around. He might consider himself a rulebreaker now, but I don't think he's really changed. He's still happy-go-lucky. He's ... he's ... too nice!"

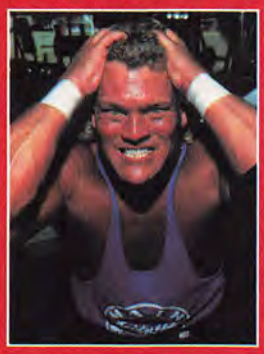
Mabel can't help what's so. He flies in the face of stereotypes. He tried to be a man on a mission and discovered that the only thing that drove him was the WWF World tag team title. With that goal seemingly out of reach, at least for now, Mabel refuses to get angry with the world. It's his paradox, his problem. Mabel's actions speak louder than his words, and his actions have no bite. □

Inside Wrestling, September 1995

The cover: Three measly months. That's how long Ric Flair's retirement lasted. A loss to Hulk Hogan at WCW Halloween Havoc 1994 was supposed to make him give it all up for good. Even though he had some extended overseas vacations planned, the "Nature Boy" couldn't say no to an invitation to attend a Clash of the Champions event. Not long thereafter, he was reinstated by WCW. We called it a mistake because he had so many old enemies waiting for him. We feared for his well-being. And he proved us wrong.

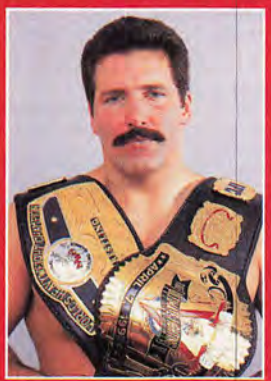


Calling Dr. Basil: For years, we all tried to figure out just how "Psycho" Sid Vicious' mind worked. We always failed. So we turned to noted psychologist Dr. Sidney M. Basil, who gave us a fairly simple analysis. Poor Sid, haunted by huge expectations for so many years, "lost his ability to deal rationally with failures and snubs" and became paranoid. The only cure? Winning the WWF or WCW world title. He ended up doing both before he was through. But he was still strange.



Bitter Brutus: One of the most shocking betrayals of 1994 took place at Halloween Havoc, as Brutus Beefcake attacked his long-time friend Hulk Hogan. "The Butcher" didn't fare well at all in their ensuing feud, and within a few months, talk of a reconciliation had begun. Then Beefcake got dumped by WCW, and Hogan snubbed him when he offered an apology. It all made Beefcake madder than ever and had him vowing revenge—revenge that he never got.

Dan The Man: Dan Severn won't go down in history as one of the better NWA champions, but he did contribute to the sport. What he gave pro wrestling was a dose of credibility. He did that by winning the fifth Ultimate Fighting Championship by beating judo expert Joe Charles, world sambo champion Oleg Taktarov, and judo/wrestling expert Dave Beneteau all in one night. He earned $50,000, and wrestling fans earned the right to call their heroes the world's toughest athletes.



Heat-ed "Hotseat": Harlem Heat's Booker T and Stevie Ray were none too happy with Senior Writer Chris Bernucca when he sat down to interview them for "Hotseat." It was Bernucca who had recently spearheaded an investigation into whether the WCW World tag team champions had more than just a professional relationship with manager Sherri Martel. They continued to deny that and also did their best to trash their arch-rivals, The Nasty Boys.

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Oct. 1998: The Mother Of All Pay-Per-Views! A WWF-WCW Supercard Is No Longer Just Talk! Also: Sable, Undertaker, Randy Savage, Sabu & Van Dam.

Nov. 1998: Demons Be Damned! Sting Makes The Giant See Red! Also: McMahon-Dude, Jarrett-Blackman, Melanie Pillman, Rey Misterio Jr.

Dec. 1998 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff! Also: ECW midyear report, Ric Flair, Kane.

Hol. 1998: "Quit, Mick!" A Desperate Plea From A Distraught Wife. Also: Chris Jericho, Jason Sensation, wrestlers vs. celebrities, hardcore war.

Jan. 1999: Stone-Cold's Personal Survivor Series. Also: Rock-HHH, NWA, Bret Hart, Howard Finkel, three-way title matches.

Feb. 1999: Hot Rocks! The Anger That Drives Shamrock & The Rock. Also: McMahon-Austin, Spike Dudley, Eric Bischoff, Perry Saturn.

March 1999 (Special Issue): 1998—The Year In Pictures. Also: Hall & Nash, Goldust, Mr. Ooh La La, The Undertaker.

April 1999: Hogan's Retirement: White House Or White Lie? Also: DDP-Hart, Taz-Douglas, Steve Austin, Mankind.

May 1999: Team Coverage: The NWO Reunion! Also: Kane-McMahon, Dallas Page, Funk-Abdullah, WWF sideshow.

June 1999 (Special Issue): Ric Flair: The 10 Feats He Must Accomplish Before He's Through. Also: Rocky Maivia, Juventud Guerrera, Billy Gunn, body parts quiz section.

July 1999: Our Bottom Line ... It's High Time Austin Shows McMahon Respect! Also: Jerry Lawler, Rey Misterio Jr., Ken Shamrock, DDP-Bigelow-Goldberg.

Aug. 1999: This Man Is Pure Evil! Trust Hogan And He'll Take You To Hell! Plus: Owen Hart, Vader, Sable.

Sept. 1999 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report. Also: DDP-Sting, Douglas-Credible, Big Show-McMahons, Disco Inferno, Keirn & Lane.

Oct. 1999: Shawn Michaels' Game Of Corporate Chess! Are The McMahons His Pawns? Also: Steiners, Billy Gunn, Savage & George.

Nov. 1999: Austin's New Powers: Shag Vince? Yeah, Baby! Also: Arn-Sid, Hardy Boys, Ernest Miller, Naoya Ogawa.

Dec. 1999 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff! Also: ECW midyear report, David & Ric Flair, Test & Stephanie.

Hol. 1999: Before The WWF Can Sell ... Read What They Had To Tell! Also: Kanyon, Big Show, Spike & Mahoney-Axl & New Jack, Kevin Nash.

Jan. 2000: An Insider's Analysis: Why The Guys Can't Handle Chyna. Also: Revolution, ECW expansion, Guerrero & Misterio, WWF/WCW/ECW women.

Feb. 2000: When Will Mankind Finally Tell The Rock ... "Put A Sock In It"? Also: Goldberg, Chris Jericho, Sabu, Harlem Heat.

Apr. 2000: Can The WWF Survive Without Steve Austin? Also: Dawn Marie-Francine, Meng, Big Show, Madusa.

May 2000: StePHONY: The Most Mistrusted McMahon Of All! Also: Harlem Heat & Midnight, David & Ric Flair, Kurt Angle, Rhino.

June 2000 (Special Issue): The Rock: No. 1 On The Jabroni Hit List! Also: Awesome-Van Dam, Kurt Angle, Vampiro, federation jumpers, book of lists.

July 2000: Tori/Torrie, What's The Story? How They Rank In 10 Crucial Categories. Also: Big Show, Tank Abbott, Too Cool, Rhodes-Dreamer, Jeff Jarrett.

Aug. 2000: We're Con-Vinced! This Attack Saved The WWF! Also: Lex Luger, Radicals, Sandman & Rhino, Cyrus.

Sept. 2000 (Special Issue): WWF Mid-Year Report. Also: Mike Awesome, Nova & Chetti, Paul Wight, Chyna, Dr. Sam Sheppard.

Oct. 2000: Is Chyna Robbing Eddie Of His Latino Heat? Also: Abbott-Steiner, Scotty Too Hotty, Rob Van Dam, David Flair.

Nov. 2000: Special Fear Issue—Rock-Benoit, Ric Flair, HBK. Also: ECW mid-year report, Bill Goldberg.

Dec. 2000 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff! Also: Goldberg-Triple-H, Daffney, Christian & Edge, Jeff Peterson.

(ALL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH THE JANUARY 2001 ISSUE)

Jan. 2001: WWF Brat-titude! Does Steph Always Get Her Way? Not On Your Life! Also: Lance Storm, Mick Foley, Goldberg, Steve Corino, Steve Blackman, Torrie Wilson.

March 2001: Triple-H & The Rock: 10 Reasons They Should Trust Each Other ... 10 Reasons They Should Not! Also: Scott Steiner, Chris Candido, Rob Van Dam, McMahon-ECW, Steven Richards, WCW factions.

May 2001: Do Anything You Want, Stone-Cold: We Can't Hate You. Also: Kronic, Rikishi, Steve Corino, Goldberg, Edge & Christian, Kane.

July 2001: Jerichoholics Beware! Serious Withdrawal Symptoms Are In Store! Also: Tajiri, Steph-Test, Undertaker, Mike Awesome, WCW Elite, Albert.

Sept. 2001: The Rock's Choice: Honor Over Glory! Also: WrestleMania X-Seven, Undertaker-Triple-H, Shane-WCW, TCL II, Scott Hall, Vince McMahon, Chris Jericho.

Nov. 2001: Goldberg! Da Man Who Could Make Or Break Wrestling! Also: Dudleys, Steve Corino, Chris Benoit, Dusty Rhodes, Lita, WWF top tier.

Jan. 2002: Can The Rock Handle The Unrelenting Pressure Of Fame? Also: RVD, Paul Heyman, Terry Gordy, Flash-Jericho, Tajiri-Tazz, WWF-Alliance

March 2002: Outsiders Looking In! Hall & Nash Take Aim At The WWF! Also: Ivory, Austin-Angle, Christian-Edge, what's ahead in '02.

May 2002: Ric Flair: 10 Reasons He Terrifies Vince McMahon. Also: Undertaker, Jeff Hardy, Survivor Series, S.A.T., report cards.

July 2002: Hail The NWO ... But Don't Forget The N-W-Woes! Also: Edge, Billy & Chuck, Leviathon, Jericho-Flair, Goldust.

Sept. 2002: What's Left? Hulk Hogan's Five Remaining Tasks. Also: Steve Austin, Kurt Angle, Rey Misterio Jr., Jeff Peterson, WWF draft.

Nov. 2002: Who's Next? The Stars That Could Replace Stone-Cold. Also: Torrie Wilson, Davey Boy Smith, Ken Shamrock, Funk-Abdullah-Rhodes-Sullivan, WWE shockers, indy roulette.

Jan. 2003: War Games! WWE Is Out Of Control ... And Vinnie Mac Loves It! Also: Rey Misterio Jr., A.J. Styles, Rikishi-Gangrel, The Rock, Christian.

March 2003: The WrestleMania XIX We Want To See! Also: Terry Funk, Rey Misterio Jr., Nidia, NWA-TNA, what's ahead in '03.

May 2003: A Permanent Replacement For The Rock? Book It! Also: Smackdown, Joanie & Syxx-Pac, Raw report cards, Shawn Michaels, Victoria.

July 2003: In Tune With Steve Austin—A Comprehensive Guide To Stone-Cold's Red-Hot Comeback. Also: Kurt Angle, Amazing Red, The Sheik, Bill DeMott, Al Snow, Ric Flair.

Sept. 2003: Goldberg's Golden Road To WWE. Also: Hardys, Chance Beckett, Kevin Nash, WrestleMania "B" card, *Playboy*-WWE.

Nov. 2003: The Women Of Wrestling—Do We Expect Too Much From Their Bodies? Also: A.J. Styles, Freddie Blassie, Goldberg, Stacy Keibler, evolution of wrestling.

Jan. 2004: No Fear! Ask Angle ... He's Never Been Hurt A Day In His Life! Also: Punk-Raven, Orton-Guerrero-Rock, TNA vs. WWE, Mankind, Hall of Fame.

March 2004: McMahon vs. McWoman: How Vince vs. Stephanie Nearly Ruined WWE! Also: Flair & Dusty, Eric Angle, Jeff Jarrett, Shannon Moore, what's ahead in '04.

May 2004: Who's Got The Edge? The Inside Story Of The Raw-Smackdown Bidding War! Also: Bret Hart, Sumie Sakai, Steiner-Stacy, Smackdown report cards.

July 2004: Stop Right There! RVD Won't Let The Young Studs Pass Him By! Also: Jonny Fairplay, Walters-Xavier, HHH-HBK.

Oct. 2004: Austin, Lesnar, Goldberg: We Know Who'll Be Back First. Also: A.J. Styles, Eugene, Rene Dupree, mid-year report.

Jan. 2005: Evolving Beyond Evolution: It's Time For Randy Orton To Be A Man! Also: Rey Misterio Jr., Kane-Lita, Ron Killings, La Resistance, Eugene-Helmsley, Trish-Victoria, Kurt Angle, WWE mid-carders.

April 2005: PPV Revolution: How Taboo Tuesday & Victory Road Changed Wrestling Forever. Also: Eddie Guerrero, Jushin Liger, Edge-Benoit, Kane-Snitsky, TNA vs. ROH, Heyman & Heidenreich, Charlie Haas, WWE pink slips.

the Wrestler

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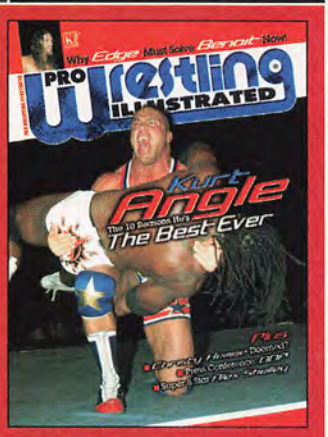
PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED welcomes readers' comments on any of our stories or columns. Send letters to: BETWEEN FALLS Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034
Or you can e-mail your comments to prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com
Letters preceded by a ☎ indicate letters left by fans on the *PWI* Hotline (1-900-226-4PWI; see ad elsewhere in this issue).

SIMPLY THE BEST?



If you're going to make a case that any athlete is the "best ever" in his sport, you had better be ready to get plenty of mail on the matter. That's a lesson we learned when we ran our story on why we feel Kurt Angle may well be the best wrestler of all-time in our August 2005 edition.

"It is an absolute treat to watch Angle compete," wrote David Bentley of Oshawa, Ontario. "He is the most fundamentally sound wrestler of our generation. He could wrestle a mop and turn it into a classic."

"Angle is the kind of wrestler that makes me proud to be a wrestling fan," said Lynn Stachiewicz of Dillon, South Carolina. "His athletic credentials are impeccable, and his list of five-star matches is a mile long. When he's on TV, even non-wrestling fans can't help but watch."

But there are always two sides to every argument.

"Angle the best ever? You've got to be kidding," e-mailed Glenn Brown of Miami. "Angle has never even been the top guy in WWE for a prolonged period of time, let alone the best ever!"

THANKS FOR THE THESZ

Once again I would like to thank you for your coverage of some of the legends of wrestling. I just got the August 2005 edition and was happy to find coverage on possibly the greatest wrestler to step foot into a wrestling ring, Lou Thesz ("*Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame").

I was saddened to hear of his death back in 2002, and I hadn't known too much about him. After you guys wrote an article about the original Sheik, I hoped you guys would write something about Thesz, and you finally did. I hope you continue to cover more legends throughout your publications, and once again, thanks for bringing the past to the present.

ZIGGY BRADLEY
Hawkz80@aol.com

FORGET ANGLE ...

I am responding to an article in the August issue of *PWI* that presents an argument that Kurt Angle is the best professional wrestler ever. I completely disagree.

Kurt Angle might be the best pure athlete in WWE, but he is not the best wrestler ever. I would consider Triple-H to be the best ever. Triple-H was a dominant and deserving world champion. He is a former Intercontinental, European, and tag team champion and the first champion of the Raw brand.

Triple-H has won diverse matches, including last-man-standing bouts, "Hell In A Cell" bouts, streetfights, and "Elimination Chamber" matches. He has beaten virtually every big name in the sport and is a 10-time world champion. Triple-H is per-

The fact that Triple-H has beaten Kurt Angle shouldn't do much to discount our argument that Angle is the best ever, but reader Jason Hutton believes "The Game" has earned that honor.

haps the greatest WWE superstar of all-time. He is certainly a better wrestler than Hulk Hogan.

Good arguments can also be made for Ric Flair, Hogan, Shawn Michaels, and Bret Hart as well. I don't consider Steve Austin or The Rock to be the best ever, since neither could hold the title for more than a year, unlike Triple-H. "The Game" has also soundly defeated both Austin and Rock.

Triple-H has silenced his critics. I believe Triple-H will be the competitor who unseats John Cena for the WWE championship very soon. Triple-H gets my support for the best ever. Kurt Angle doesn't make the cut.

JASON HUTTON
Brantford, Ontario

Did we slight Shelton Benjamin in our recent "State Of Raw" analysis? Kelvin Ash thinks so. If we did, it was unintentional.

SHAWN AND CENA AND HULK!

June 27, 2005. A day that will live in infamy. The night on which three generations of superstars stood in a WWE ring at the same time.

WWE Hall of Famer Hulk Hogan, future Hall of Famer Shawn Michaels, and current WWE champion John Cena were on the same team in a six-man tag team victory over Chris Jericho, Christian, and Tyson Tomko on *Raw*. Every wrestling fan in the world had to have been touched by this moment in some way or another.

Whether it was Cena and Hogan posing together, Michaels and Hogan putting their hands to their ears and listening to the crowd, or Cena respectfully leaving the ring to Michaels and Hogan, bowing to the legends from the entrance ramp.

Even if you're not a fan of one or all three of these athletes, it was truly a magical and historical moment, and one that won't be forgotten for a very long time.

JEFF JUDD
heluvajobu@yahoo.com

PHOENIX IN *PWI*

I enjoyed the July 2005 "Straight Shooter" column on Beth Phoenix by Dan Murphy. I agree it is hard for women to get a spot in WWE. Right now, the big news is that the size of her breasts might overshadow her other talents. Beth also happens to be a great piano player and singer and graduated from college with a law degree, but only those close to her know those things.

I agree with her that the guys don't have things easy, either. There are more of them and only a limited number of spots on the roster. They also have to watch their weight, work out everyday, and keep their looks up. But they do it for the excitement, travel, and the awesome people they meet along the way. It's a great life.

GORETTA CAROLAN
Fort Erie, Ontario

WHAT ABOUT BENJAMIN?

In the July 2005 edition of *PWI*, you guys evaluated the "State Of Raw" and did a pretty good job. You mentioned all of the top tier players at the time, like Batista, Triple-H, Shawn Michaels, Edge, Randy Orton, and Chris Jericho. Muhammad Hassan and Christian were mentioned as the brand's top mid-carders, but Shelton Benjamin wasn't even mentioned in the article.

How could your editors allow such a slight to occur? This issue also covered WrestleMania 21, and considering Shelton's amazing performance in the "Money In The Bank" ladder match, his omission seemed like an insult. Not to mention the fact that he had been the Intercontinental champion for more than seven months and recently had a bout against Shawn Michaels that should be a serious Match of the Year candidate. I'm usually satisfied with a *PWI* analysis, but you really dropped the ball on this one.

KELVIN ASH
Columbus, GA □

PWI Hotline Extra!

Your answers to our question of the week!

Question of the Week: Of all the recent releases from WWE, which wrestler will you miss most? (July 13 to 19, 2005)

Hotline callers respond: "I'll miss the Dudleys most," said Eric Battaglia of Erie, Pennsylvania. "It's ridiculous that Buh Buh and D-Von got cut just a month after headlining one of the best PPVs of the year in One Night Stand. What kind of message does that send to the locker room?"

"I don't know why, but Charlie Haas never got the opportunity he deserved," said Cheryl Carr of Baltimore. "He could have been at least a great Intercontinental champ, but he couldn't get through the glass ceiling."

"I may be alone in this, but I was a big fan of Kenzo Suzuki and the beautiful Hiroko," said Will Heim of Tucson, Arizona. "I hate to see them go."

PWI official ratings

For period ended July 29, 2005

TOP 10

1. **BATISTA**
   318, Washington, DC
   (1) World champion
2. **JOHN CENA**
   260, West Newbury, MA
   (2) WWE champion
3. **SATOSHI KOJIMA**
   223, Tokyo, Japan
   (3) All-Japan Triple Crown champion
4. **EDGE**
   240, Toronto, Ontario
   (9) No. 1contender: WWE title
5. **RAVEN**
   243, Short Hills, NJ
   (7) NWA heavyweight champion
6. **KAZUYUKI FUJITA**
   253, Funabashi, Japan
   (–) IWGP heavyweight champion
7. **JOHN B. LAYFIELD**
   306, Roscoe, TX
   (6) No. 1 contender: World title
8. **CHRIS JERICHO**
   225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
   (–) No. 2 contender: WWE title
9. **THE UNDERTAKER**
   304, Dallas, TX
   (–) No. 2 contender: World title
10. **C.M. PUNK**
    220, Chicago, IL
    (10) Ring of Honor champion

C.M. Punk

TAG TEAMS

1. **THE HURRICANE & ROSEY**
   Combined weight: 570 pounds
   (4) WWE Raw tag team champions
2. **ANDY DOUGLAS & CHASE STEVENS**
   Combined weight: 444 pounds
   (2) NWA tag team champions
3. **NAOMICHI MARUFUJI & MINORU SUZUKI**
   Combined weight: 429 pounds
   (–) GHC tag team champions
4. **JOEY MERCURY & JOHNNY NITRO**
   Combined weight: 417 pounds
   (1) No. 1 contenders: WWE Smackdown tag title
5. **HEIDENREICH & ROAD WARRIOR ANIMAL**
   Combined weight: 591 pounds
   (–) WWE Smackdown tag team champions
6. **JAMAL & TAIYO KEA**
   Combined weight: 591 pounds
   (6) All-Japan International tag team champions
7. **THE HEARTTHROBS**
   Combined weight: 450 pounds
   (–) No. 1 contenders: WWE Raw tag title
8. **CHAD & TANK TOLAND**
   Combined weight: 448 pounds
   (10) OVW Southern tag team champions
9. **SHINSUKE NAKAMURA & HIROSHI TANAHASHI**
   Combined weight: 477 pounds
   (3) IWGP International tag team champions
10. **CHRIS HARRIS & JAMES STORM**
    Combined weight: 516 pounds
    (7) No. 1 contenders: NWA tag title

WWE RAW

WWE Champion:
JOHN CENA
(–) 260, West Newbury, MA

1—**EDGE** *(2) 240, Toronto, Ontario*
2—**CHRIS JERICHO** *(4) 225, Winnipeg, Manitoba*
3—**CARLITO CARIBBEAN COOL** *(3) 220, San Juan, Puerto Rico*
4—**SHELTON BENJAMIN** *(5) 245, Spartanburg, SC*
5—**KURT ANGLE** *(9) 233, Pittsburgh, PA*
6—**SHAWN MICHAELS** *(8) 217, San Antonio, TX*
7—**KANE** *(7) 326, St. Louis, MO*
8—**CHRIS MASTERS** *(10) 270, Santa Monica, CA*
9—**THE BIG SHOW** *(–) 485, Aiken, SC*
10—**EUGENE** *(–) 226, Jeffersonville, IN*

WWE SMACKDOWN

World Champion:
BATISTA
(–) 318, Washington, DC

1—**JOHN B. LAYFIELD** *(1) 306, Roscoe, TX*
2—**THE UNDERTAKER** *(8) 304, Dallas, TX*
3—**REY MISTERIO JR.** *(6) 163, San Diego, CA*
4—**ORLANDO JORDAN** *(7) 250, Miami, FL*
5—**BOOKER T** *(3) 250, Houston, TX*
6—**EDDIE GUERRERO** *(4) 223, El Paso, TX*
7—**CHRIS BENOIT** *(2) 224, Edmonton, Alberta*
8—**PAUL LONDON** *(9) 201, Austin, TX*
9—**CHRISTIAN** *(–) 225, Toronto, Ontario*
10—**WILLIAM REGAL** *(–) 248, Blackpool, England*

OVW

OVW Champion:
BRENT ALBRIGHT
(C) 230, Tulsa, OK

1—**KEN DOANE** *(4) 210, Louisville, KY*
2—**AARON STEVENS** *(8) 237, Boston, MA*
3—**DEUCE SHADE** *(1) 230, Fiji Islands*
4—**ELIJAH BURKE** *(–) 230, Jacksonville, FL*
5—**BLASTER LASHLEY** *(3) 255, Topeka, KS*
6—**KEN ANDERSON** *(–) 225, Minneapolis, MN*
7—**MIKE MONDO** *(10) 185, Long Island City, NY*
8—**NICK NEMETH** *(–) 210, Cleveland, OH*
9—**CHRIS CAGE** *(–) 220, Youngstown, OH*
10—**DANNY INFERNO** *(5) 237, Atlantic City, NJ*

RING OF HONOR

ROH Champion:
C.M. PUNK
(C) 220, Chicago, IL

1—**SAMOA JOE** *(1) 270, American Samoa*
2—**CHRISTOPHER DANIELS** *(9) 210, Los Angeles, CA*
3—**JIMMY RAVE** *(3) 162, Atlanta, GA*
4—**A.J. STYLES** *(5) 202, Gainesville, GA*
5—**SPANKY** *(7) 212, Olympia, WA*
6—**AUSTIN ARIES** *(2) 202, Milwaukee, WI*
7—**ALEX SHELLEY** *(2) 199, Detroit, MI*
8—**JAMES GIBSON** *(4) 190, Hanover, WV*
9—**HOMICIDE** *(3) 220, Brooklyn, NY*
10—**NIGEL McGUINNESS** *(10) 220, London, England*

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

AMERICAN PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Shane Austin; **1**—Ostgard; **2**—Zack Salvation; **3**—Steve Cronic; **4**—Ken Magnum; **5**—Sir Jonathan Buffett; **6**—Rowdy James; **7**—Mickey Richards; **8**—Mark Slain; **9**—Jesse Black; **10**—Kid Kaos.

AWA SUPREME CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Billy Maverick; **1**—Nic Noble; **2**—Kliff Hanger; **3**—Eric Draven; **4**—Chris Blayze; **5**—Damien Divine; **6**—Jack Black; **7**—Vito Andretti; **8**—William Valentine; **9**—Robert Royale; **10**—Live Wire.

BAD 2 THE BONE WRESTLING: Champion—Vic the Bruiser; **1**—Simon Sezz; **2**—J.C. Bailey; **3**—Tracey Smothers; **4**—Brandon Blaze; **5**—Todd Morton; **6**—Real Sexxy; **7**—Randy Royal; **8**—Billy Black; **9**—Billy Maverick; **10**—Maxx Mizery.

CHAOTIC WRESTLING: Champion—Mike Kruel; **1**—Chase Del Monte; **2**—Handsome Johnny; **3**—Brian Milonas; **4**—Luis Ortiz; **5**—Maverick Wild; **6**—Arch Kincaid; **7**—Andre Lyonz; **8**—Fred Sampson; **9**—Tommy Penmanship; **10**—The Mighty Mini.

CHIKARA: Champion—Shane Storm; **1**—Icarus; **2**—Jigsaw; **3**—Claudio Castagnoli; **4**—Mike Quackenbush; **5**—Chris Hero; **6**—Larry Sweeney; **7**—Hallowicked; **8**—Gran Akuma; **9**—Arik Cannon; **10**—Equinox.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—Scotty Charisma; **1**—Chase Del Monte; **2**—Vic D. Vine; **3**—Freak Nasty; **4**—Cheetah Master; **5**—Mega; **6**—Mr. Ooh La La; **7**—Mike Kruel; **8**—Andrew Ryker; **9**—Shawn Patrick; **10**—Aden Chambers.

FAR NORTH WRESTLING: Champion—Seth James; **1**—Austin Aries; **2**—T. Rantula; **3**—B-Boy; **4**—Hacksaw Duggan; **5**—Dennis Gregory; **6**—Sterling James Keenan; **7**—Leslie Leatherman; **8**—Lord Zoltan; **9**—C.J. O'Doyle; **10**—Blue Meanie.

IWA FLASHFIRE: Champion—Don Matthews; **1**—Buford T; **2**—Casey J; **3**—Rahn Jordan; **4**—Boulevard; **5**—Phillip Pain; **6**—Golden Eagle; **7**—Purple Passion; **8**—Hallowicked; **9**—Tower; **10**—Lance Christopher.

KYDA PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Leslie Leatherman; **1**—Joseph Brooks; **2**—C.A. Elliott; **3**—Tank Thomas; **4**—Shane McIntyre; **5**—John Kermon; **6**—Chucky Wynn; **7**—Lance McIntyre; **8**—Snatch Haggis; **9**—Trey Weber; **10**—Billy Johnson.

NWA VIRGINIA: Champion—Scotty Blaze; **1**—Mike Booth; **2**—Damian Wayne; **3**—Preston Quinn; **4**—Brandon Day; **5**—Shane Falco; **6**—Pharoah; **7**—Chris Escobar; **8**—Mike Vaughn; **9**—Midnight Mauler; **10**—Beef.

PRO WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT: Champion—Larry Sweeney; **1**—Glen Osbourne; **2**—Mike Quackenbush; **3**—Hallowicked; **4**—King Kong Bundy; **5**—Johnny Graham; **6**—Coach Boden; **7**—Gran Akuma; **8**—The Patriot; **9**—Sabian; **10**—Harley Watkins.

WORLD OF HURT WRESTLING: Champion—Danger; **1**—Nick Neighborhood; **2**—Jeff Starr; **3**—Tex Outlaw; **4**—Chuck Deep; **5**—Vendetta; **6**—Scott Scarsdale; **7**—Shockwave; **8**—J.P. Black; **9**—Shane Alden; **10**—Virus.

NWA

NWA Champion:
RAVEN
(C) 243, Short Hills, NJ

1—A.J. STYLES
(1) 202, Gainesville, GA
2—JEFF JARRETT
(2) 230, Nashville, TN
3—ABYSS
(3) 295, Cincinnati, OH
4—SEAN WALTMAN
(5) 219, Minneapolis, MN
5—CHRISTOPHER DANIELS
(8) 210, Los Angeles, CA
6—J.T. WOLFEN
(6) 297, New Haven, CT
7—SPYDER
(7) 225, New York, NY
8—VID VAIN
(9) 257, Bishops Falls, NF
9—PETEY WILLIAMS
(–) 180, Windsor, Ontario
10—JASON RUMBLE
(–) 201, Boston, MA

TNA

NWA Champion:
RAVEN
(C) 243, Short Hills, NJ

1—CHRISTOPHER DANIELS
(1) 210, Los Angeles, CA
2—ABYSS
(2) 295, Cincinnati, OH
3—A.J. STYLES
(3) 202, Gainesville, GA
4—PETEY WILLIAMS
(–) 180, Windsor, Ontario
5—JEFF JARRETT
(7) 230, Nashville, TN
6—SEAN WALTMAN
(5) 219, Minneapolis, MN
7—SAMOA JOE
(9) 270, American Samoa
8—MONTY BROWN
(4) 268, Detroit, MI
9—ALEX SHELLEY
(–) 199, Detroit, MI
10—LANCE HOYT
(–) 290, Dallas, TX

JAPAN

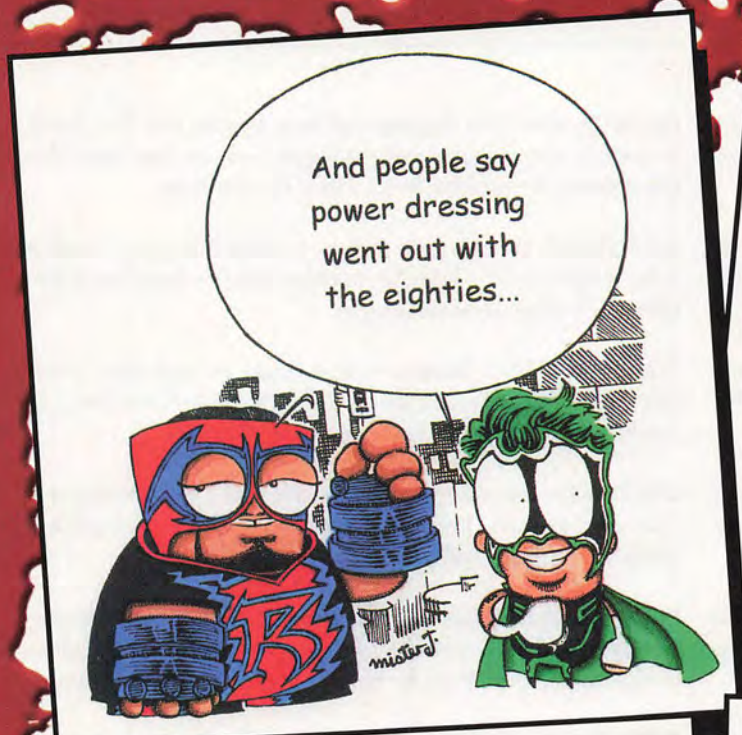
1—SATOSHI KOJIMA
(1) 223, Tokyo, Japan
All-Japan Triple Crown champion
2—KAZUYUKI FUJITA
(–) 253, Funabashi, Japan
IWGP heavyweight champion
3—TAKESHI RIKIOH
(3) 286, Sakurai, Japan
GHC heavyweight champion
4—HIROYOSHI TENZAN
(2) 270, Tokyo, Japan
5—TIGER MASK IV
(4) 170, Uruyasu, Japan
6—KEIJI MUTO
(9) 245, Yamanashi, Japan
7—KENTA KOBASHI
(5) 282, Fukuchiyama, Japan
8—TAKA MICHINOKU
(–) 169, Morioka, Japan
9—MASA CHONO
(–) 235, Tokyo, Japan
10—JUSHIN LIGER
(6) 222, Hiroshima, Japan

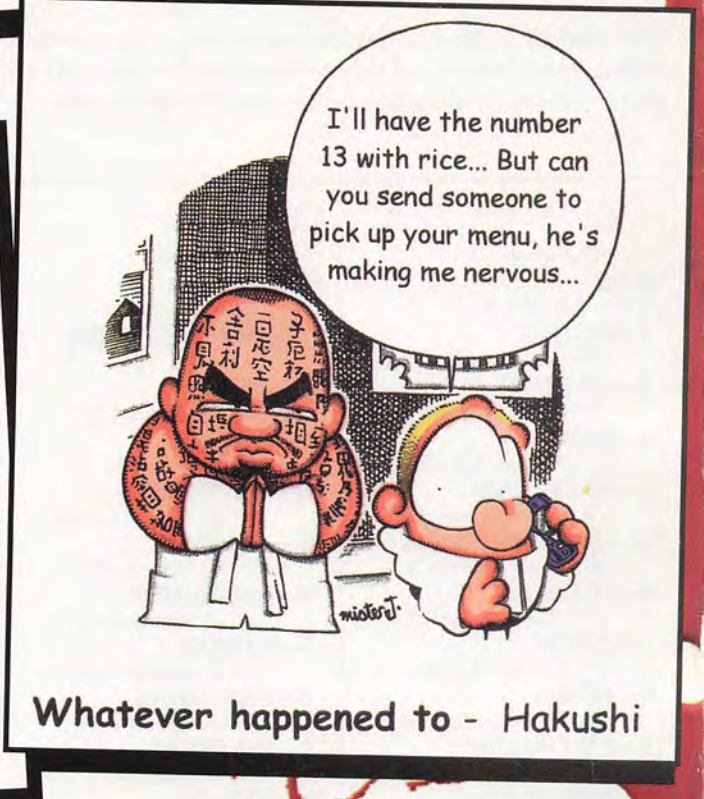
MEXICO

1—EL HIJO DEL SANTO
(2) 180, Tulancingo, Mexico
2—LIZMARK JR.
(–) 195, Acapulco, Mexico
3—ULTIMO GUERRERO
(–) 173, Mexico City, Mexico
4—ATLANTIS
(–) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico
5—LA PARK
(1) 235, Torreon, Mexico
6—PERRO AGUAYO JR.
(–) 165, Zacatecas, Mexico
7—SHOCKER
(–) 185, Guadalajara, Mexico
8—HECTOR GARZA
(6) 220, Monterrey, Mexico
9—LATIN LOVER
(8) 190, Monterrey, Mexico
10—MISTICO
(7) 194, Mexico City, Mexico

Drawing Blood

By Jason Conlan





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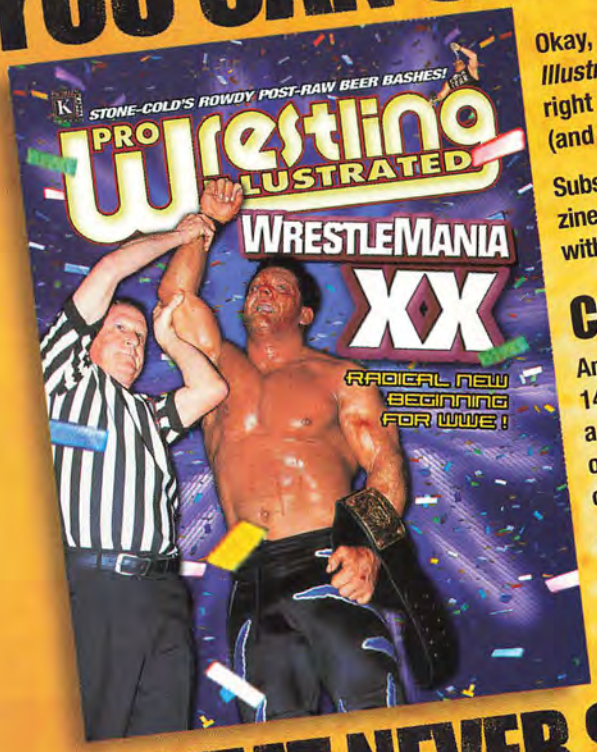

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